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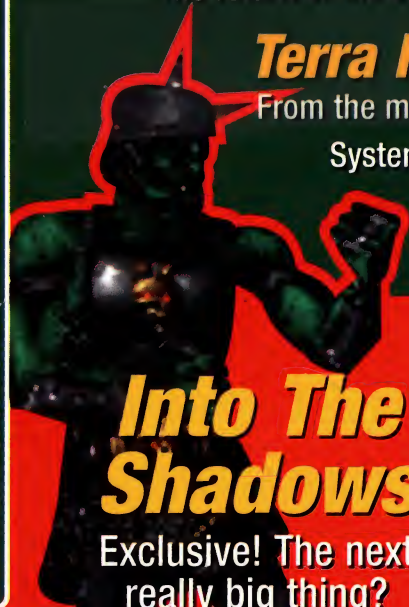
Have Activision Myst the plot?

Azrael's Tear

The return of the cool RPG!

Terra Nova

From the makers of
System Shock

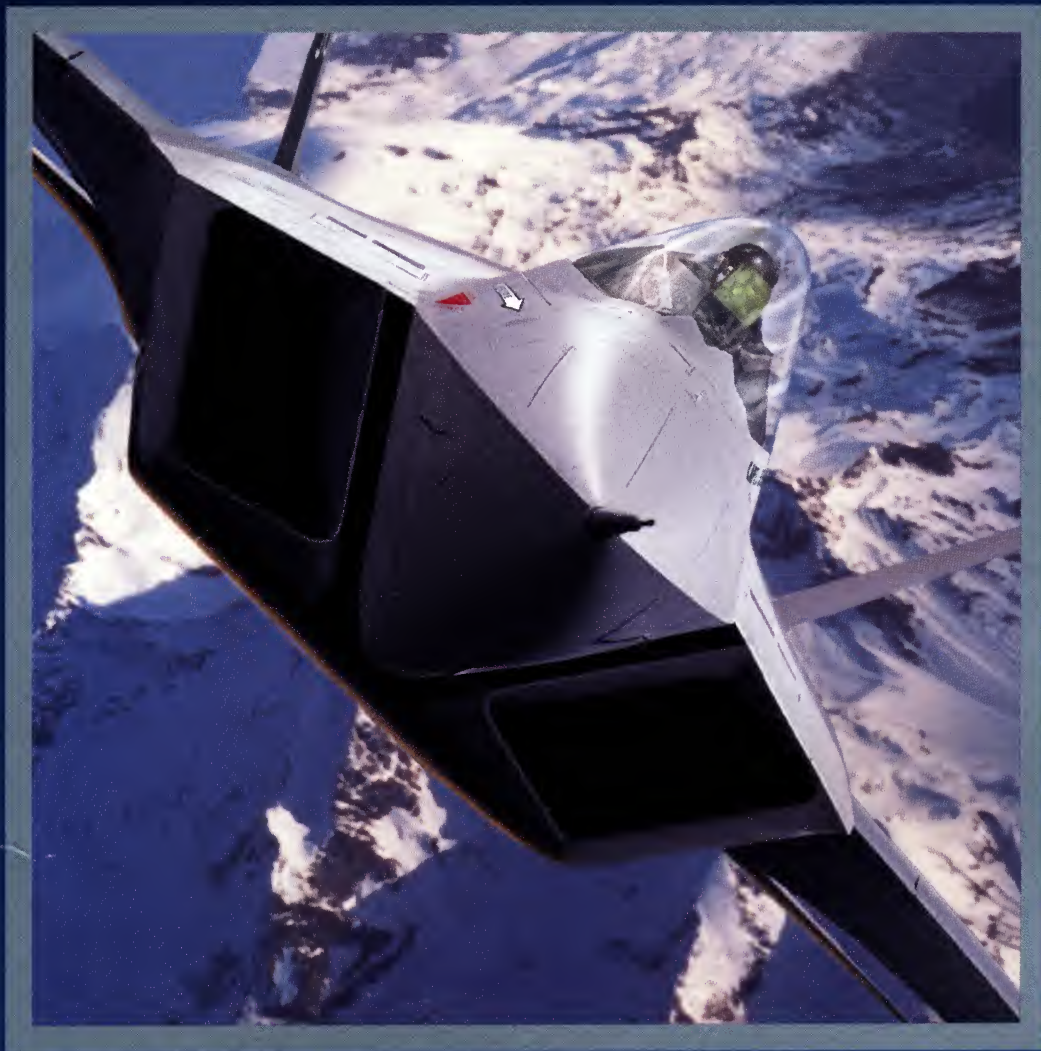


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X-29 FSW



F-117A Nighthawk



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F-22

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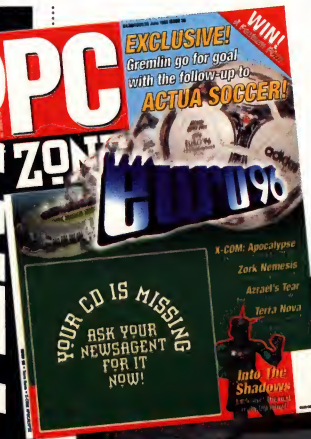


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Is Euro 96 the best footie game ever on the PC, or is it merely a re-released version of Actua Soccer with an official championship licence? Turn to page 48...



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Could this be the next 'big thing' to emerge on the PC? Blending the gaming styles of *Fade To Black* and *FX Fighter*, from what we've seen of it so far, it could be pretty damn smart. So there.

Superheroes 26

MicroProse unveil another novel twist to the strategy genre. None of this mucking around with snorey old soldiers here.

X-COM: Apocalypse 31

If Chris has a girlfriend at the moment, she should think about bugging off sharpish because the third and most impressive game in the X-COM series is nearly upon us.

Hind 34

Digital Integration are putting the finishing touches to the follow-up to *Apache Longbow*. But will it be better than EA's *Longbow*? Place your bets...

Masters Of Orion 2 36

An inevitable sequel, especially bearing in mind all of the other 'Master Of' games. Better graphics and better gameplay seem a likely prospect. Well, what did you expect?

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Mirage give up on robots thumping each other and turn their attention towards robots shooting each other instead. Better stock up on the WD40.

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Two sports games with 'personality power' this month. First we have the new Daley Thompson game (yes, that Daley Thompson)...

Pete Sampras Extreme Tennis 44

...and then we have Codemasters' new tennis game with Mr Sampras himself in the spotlight. What more could you want, eh?



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Chronicles Of The Sword 60
Psygnosis' mega-rendered, sprawling Arthurian adventure is now finished and about to do battle in the shops. But verily sire, is it any good?

Conquest Of The New World 63
Interplay's stab at strategy gaming has received rave reviews in the States, but do the yanks really know what they're talking about?

Zork Nemesis 64
It's the prequel to *Zork*, it looks and plays a bit like *Myst*, and let's not beat about the bush here... it's a tad boring.

Fast Attack 66
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Silent Thunder 71
The follow-up to *A10 Tank Killer*. It looks bloody amazing, but the gameplay is far from perfect.

Fantasy General 72
Mindscape unleash yet another game in their 'General' series, which no doubt means that a number of people will end up terminating relationships and buying TV dinners for one. Aaahh.

Terra Nova 76
Another robot game - but they're not humungous and have been dreamt up by the guys behind *System Shock* and *Flight Unlimited*. Top stuff indeedy.

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C:\>Cover Disk

HD DISK



PC ZONE

All you have to do is pop the disk in the floppy drive and then run the PCZONE file from the A: prompt. Just follow the instructions on screen to install the demo's.

Tyrian 2.0

(Epic Megagames)

Put the disk into your floppy drive and type: <PCZONE>. This sexy little batch file will then run the install program for Tyrian. There are two options to choose from - one installs the game to a specified directory and the other exits the program. Once installed set up your sound card and type <TYRIAN> to play. Use the mouse to manoeuvre the ship and both buttons to fire and use the special weapons. An excellent sequel to an already classic blast 'em up.

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, DOS

XQuest 2

(Shareware)

Install XQuest 2 from the menu by typing <PCZONE> as above, and follow the on-screen instructions. This is the follow-up to the cult classic shareware XQuest. The idea is to use your mouse to guide your ship around each increasingly complex level collecting items while avoiding and shooting aliens and various objects. It's incredibly simple, addictive fun!

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick



(Left) What are you waiting for? Get blasting in Tyrian 2.0.



To access the plethora of orgasmic playable demos on this rather splendid PC Zone cover CD change to your CD-ROM drive letter and type <PCZONE>.

The menu is easy to use and simply clicking on the icon of the demo you want to run with the left mouse button will launch the installer for it automatically - just follow the on-screen instructions. Windows 95 and Windows 3.* users should follow the same procedure, but from the DOS prompt.

To access the Windows programs and demos please launch the <BROWSER.EXE> file from Windows Explorer or File manager and double-click the required program, utility or demo to install/run.

PLAYABLE DEMOS

EXCLUSIVE!

Track Attack (MicroProse)

Hit the winding tracks with MicroProses's latest racer Track Attack. It's more in the vein of Fatal Racing and Screamer - fast action and aggressive, bumper to bumper racing.

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

Miles Tudor, CD Exchange (38), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London. W1P 7HJ

Your details (please print clearly)

Name:

Address:

Post code:

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CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles (never before 11.00am) on: 0171-917 7693





EXCLUSIVE!

S.T.O.R.M. (Electronic Arts)

EA's underwater shooting frenzy arrives in demo form. Hurrah! Guide the high-tech sub under the ocean searching for power-ups and blasting innocent fish to death. Sounds like fun!

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Civilization 2 (MicroProse)

Rolling demo of Civ 2 from Sid Meier and the team at MPS US. Watch this, then go and buy the game, it's brilliant.

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, Windows 3.* , 95

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

The Rise and Rule of Ancient Empires (Sierra)

This one's something of a *Civilization* clone - you have to build your capital and start amassing troops ready for the full frontal assault on the enemy who are doing exactly the same thing just across the water.

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, Windows 95

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

EXCLUSIVE!

TKO Boxing (Digital Lobster)

Well-endowed ladies beating the living daylights out of each other - need we say more? Fully rendered animations and main characters make this one of the finer looking boxing games on the pc.

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Earthsiege 2 (Sierra)

Robot fighting rules! Slog it out on the ravaged planes of a future planet Earth with big guns and missiles. Aim for arms and legs to add to the fun of watching an enemy HERC run away/hop away, then move in for the kill in this incredibly good looking and impressive sequel.

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, Windows 95

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Battleground Gettysburg

(Empire)

The next in the *Battleground* series after *Ardennes*. Enter the American Civil War and "Kick ass for the Lord boy!". Well, Americans seem to like shooting each other and this is no exception. Use the mouse to identify and move your units into battle.

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Assault Rigs (Psygnosis)

Psygnosis' most triumphant futuristic tank warfare game across an array of garish levels. Guide your hover tank through the various rooms taking out defences and collecting the keys to eventually blast your way out of the level. Sunglasses not included.

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Dawn Patrol: Head to Head

(Empire)

Excellent patch to allow head-to-head aerial combat for Empire's tremendous flight sim. Install the patch by following the on-screen instructions and make sure you've got the original game before you try it.

Specifications: Requires the original game

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

EXCLUSIVE!

C&C Desktop Themes (Westwood)

Westwood's amazing official desktop themes for the Windows 95 plus pack. There are three to choose from: EVA, which recreates the sultry computer advisor on your desktop, C&D and NOD. All the sounds are recorded in 16-bit, the backgrounds are in high-colour and the mouse cursors are C&C rendered animations. Can these guys do anything badly? We think not.

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, Windows 95

Controls: Mouse



Afterlife (Virgin/LucasArts)

The God genre takes a new twist - this game takes place in heaven and hell after your life. A bit of a diversion from the usual LucasArts style, but make your own mind up with this playable demo.

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, Windows 95

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

EXCLUSIVE!

Hexen 1.1 Patch (iD/GT Interactive)

Bored with four-player *Hexen*? Then slap this patch on your machine for eight-player network play. It also tidies up a few graphical glitches and bugs that squeezed into the final release.

Specifications: Requires full registered version of *Hexen*

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Bass Fishing (Electronic Arts)

Real fishing on the pc! Pick your bait, the right area of river to start your day sitting on your arse, and then practice your casting and reeling techniques to catch the big beauties.

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

XQuest 2 (Shareware)

An incredibly addictive arcade puzzler-blaster. Please check the HD section for a full description.

Specifications: 386, 4Mb, DOS

Controls: Mouse

Fighter Duel (Philips Media)

Take to the skies in this playable flight sim which recreates dogfights of the 1940s. Features realistic flight and aircraft models for you to loop the loop and crash into the floor at high speeds.

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

(Above) Unleash your road rage in *Track Attack*.

(Right) Wahey! Have a go at Psyggy's new futuristic tank warfare game *Assault Rigs* - we think you'll like it.



« Piranha (Shareware)

Classic arcade asteroid fun. With full 3D-rendered baddies and asteroids, it looks lovely! Shoot the larger rocks to get power-ups for your ship and don't forget to take out the enemy UFOs as they arrive or you'll be in trouble.

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Bad Mojo (Accolade)

Ever fancied being a cockroach for a day? Well, now's your chance. Chew on dead rats and watch out for the fly paper in this incredibly strange cockroach sim.

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, Windows 95

Controls: Mouse

Tyrian 2 (Epic Megagames)

Enhanced sequel to this classic shooter. Please see the HD section for a full description of the game.

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Magic: The Gathering

(MicroProse)

Another desktop theme with 16-bit sound and resolution, plus many hi-res images.

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, Windows 95 and Plus Pack

Controls: Mouse



Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's just being a total bast? Then just relax, chill out, have a cold shower and then phone the relevant help line:

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990
Any week day between 9am and 4pm.

CD-ROM HELP

Phone Miles Tudor on 0171-917 7693
Any week day between 11am and 6pm
(DO NOT phone earlier as your calls will NOT be answered)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

(Above) Tarmac and testosterone in *Big Red Racing*...

(Below) Step back in time with *Magic: The Gathering*...



Big Red Racing (Domark)

At last, a playable demo of one of the best arcade racers for a long time. Choose a character and logo and take the jeep onto the Japanese circuit for a spin – literally. Excellent off-road racing action. The cursor keys control the car, or you can set them up for yourself.

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, DOS or Windows 95

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

EXCLUSIVE

SU27 Missions (Mindscape)

Some missions for SU27 for all those top pilots who've finished the game and require a new challenge.

Specifications: Requires the original game

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Age Of Rifles (SSI)

Another strategy gem from those clever people at SSI – thanks chaps!

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, Windows 3.1, 95

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

3D Pinball VCR (21st Century)

Er, it's a pinball game...

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Real Deal (Shareware)

Cards for all. More card games than you can shake a stick at.

Specifications: 386, 4Mb, Windows 3.1, 95

Controls: Keyboard, mouse



Tac Ops (Strategy Plus)

Tactical Operations for Windows. It's an excellent strategic wargame – simplistic graphics but a very complex AI system.

Specifications: 386, 4Mb, Windows 3.1, 95

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

World Rally Fever (Team 17)

Fully playable arcade rally racer – and it's lots of fun.

Specifications: 486, 4Mb, DOS

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Daley Thompson's World Class Decathlon (Interactive Magic)

Unfortunately not the Commodore 64 classic, but it's still a playable version of Daley's latest foray into the world computer games.

Specifications: 486, 8Mb, Windows 95

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Warcraft 2 Levels

More levels for *Warcraft 2* fanatics.

Specifications: Requires the original game

Controls: Mouse

UTILITIES

Essentials

As always we've gathered together the essential utilities to make life that little bit easier. Disk utils, compression utils – you name it, it's here.

Internet

We thought we'd go overboard on the Internet software and give you just about everything you need to get on-line and stay there. Excellent! There's free time to be had on the Internet, CompuServe and AOL, plus a whole truck load of browsers and utils so what are you waiting for... Christmas?

Tech specs

Unless otherwise indicated the standard systems requirements for this month's software are as follows:

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2/66

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

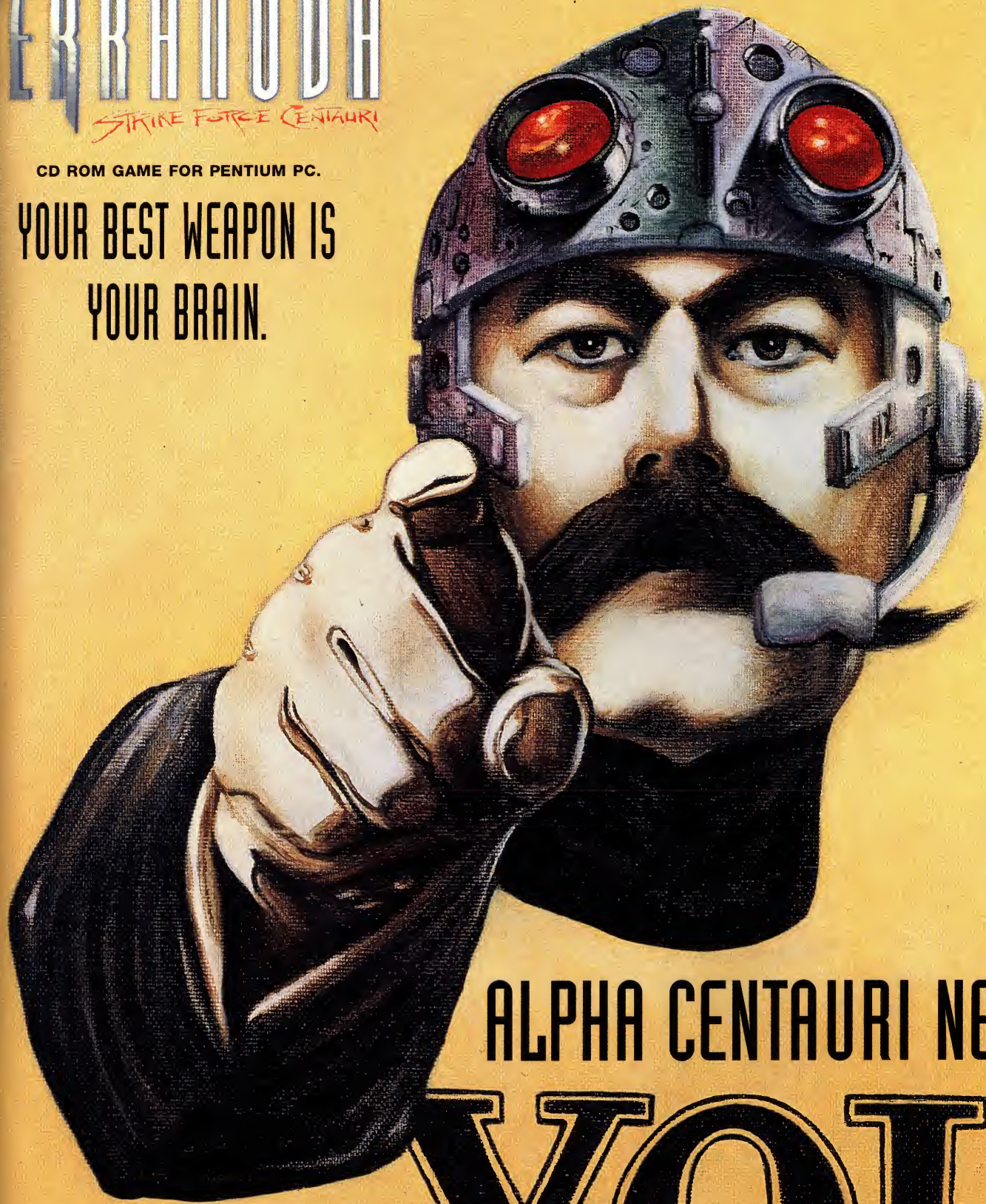
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

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BULLETIN

(Below) He strikes, he scores... Get your strip and get in on the action.

Wireplay Tournament

AS YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW, THIS month's cover game *Euro 96* is to serve as the launch game for British Telecom's Wireplay multi-player game system.

Gremlin's latest footie re-hash is due to hit the shelves in May just before the tournament starts in June, and *PC Zone* are naturally going to be on the pitch for the kick-off. In conjunction with the Virgin Megastore, Gremlin Interactive and *PC Zone*, British Telecom will be holding a nationwide tournament open to all *PC Zone* readers in their London, Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle



Megastores.

Each venue will be equipped with all the necessary hardware to play the Wireplay tournaments and there'll be loads of different prizes up for grabs. Not only will there be intercity competitions, participants



will also have the chance to win tickets to the Euro 96 finals and take part in the Euro 96 Wireplay Final. Details are still sketchy as we go to press, but keep your eyes firmly peeled for competition dates and exact details of the rules and kick-off times in the next issue!

Star Trek: Generations

MicroProse have released further details of their new blockbuster *Star Trek: Generations*, due out at the end of the year.

Developed by Spectrum HoloByte, it's based on last year's film flop which brought Kirk face to face with Jean-Luc Picard. Like the first game which used the TNG license (*Star Trek - A Final Unity* which scored a massive 94 in our June 95 issue), *Generations* will feature the voices of the original cast (William Shatner, Malcolm McDowell, Patrick Stewart *et al*) plus all the right noises and 'sets'.

But the developers have changed direction since their last foray and opted for an in-er-face *System Shock* style first-person perspective view to bring the player straight into the thick of it; they've also incorporated a new 3D ship battle mode, so we can expect a bit more action. A new transitional section called 'Stellar Cartography' is where much of the plot development takes place via movie



(Above) There will be outside shooty bits...

(Below) ...and inside adventure-y *System Shock*-like bits.



segments and voice-overs, all enacted (of course) by the original *Generations* cast.

Spectrum HoloByte have tried to keep the plot's tempo a little more upbeat from the original movie's storyline with a mad scientist, Soran (McDowell), who attempts to re-enter a galactic ribbon of energy called the Nexus by destroying a series of suns, thus killing any of the solar system's inhabitants. The player must defeat Soran through engaging him in a number of action and space combat encounters using various skills and tactics.

The first-person perspective part takes place when the player assumes the persona of one of the film's characters and beams down onto a planet, spacestation or enemy starship. By interacting with numerous other NPCs (Non-Player Characters) from all over the galaxy, players must use their phasers, tricorders and any other equipment they

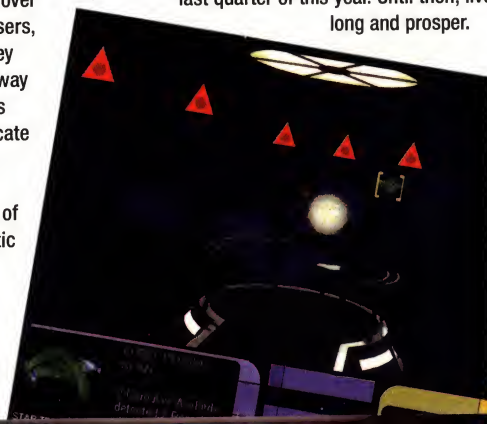
find along the way to solve various puzzles and locate the evil Soran, while also 'disabling' any of his inter-galactic cronies that

dare to get in the way.

The space combat sections feature epic battles in space between the Enterprise and enemy ships from all the various different empires. The player must take control of the Enterprise, select the right weapons, control the ship's systems and devise a winning strategy in order to survive a fight to the death in deepest 3D space.

MicroProse stress however that *Generations* is more akin to *System Shock* and *Ultima Underworld* in that it encourages the player to explore a complex sci-fi world and meet set objectives, using ingenuity and problem-solving skills rather than simply reaching for a phaser at the first sniff of trouble.

Star Trek: Generations is expected in the last quarter of this year. Until then, live long and prosper.



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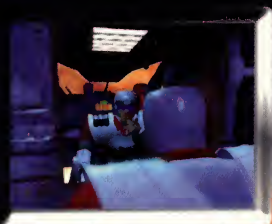


GT Interactive Software
(Europe) Ltd.

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SCI-fi

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1943: European Air War

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT THERE MIGHT be a respite from yet another flight sim, MicroProse declares the imminent arrival of 1943: *European Air War*.

Developers Spectrum HoloByte have apparently digested comments levelled at 1942 to make their new version the most accurate and playable flight sim ever. Far from being just a thinly disguised data disk, Specy reckon it will be very different to *Pacific Air War* due to the implications of a completely new theatre. As a result we can expect more technically developed aircraft, new missions that concentrate more on strategic bombing and ground support, as well as "less enthusiastic" fighter pilots.

Not only can the player take part in historically-based missions, but 1943 will also feature a complex mission

(Above left & far left) 1943: *European Air War*: Choose to fight for Blighty or the Germans, or control a fighter group of your own. Chocks away!



builder and the facility to opt for a Battle of Britain or 1943 career. Players will also be able to fly for either the Germans or Allies and select their entry level; the higher the rank chosen, the more control over the campaign (from wingman to group leader), which means the player can follow detailed mission plans or opt to control an entire fighter group, deciding who flies what missions, what armament is used and ultimately direct the tactics and strategy of an airborne force. But that's not all – the game will also have 'state of the art' 3D graphics, head-to-head and network play and 20 different planes and missions that include a maximum of 32 planes in the air at any one time. Look out for its release later in the year.

The Darkening now Privateer

The "interactive movie" known as *The Darkening*, originally due out in February, "starring" Clive 'Chancer' Owen (and some chap called Christopher Walken) has obviously seen a bit of major surgery since its sibling *Wing Commander IV* was released to a rather underwhelming response earlier this year.

Despite rumours of a *Privateer 2*, the fact that the developers have decided to turn *The Darkening* into a sequel and delayed its release by nine months has no doubt set alarm bells ringing across the gaming universe. However, EA maintain that *Privateer: The Darkening* is a "more modern version" of the classic space combat-fest. As a result the new improved version should retain all of the original's playability along with improved graphics, plot development and top quality FMV linkages to bring it up to date.

If you're still lamenting the fact that you'll never get your hands on a copy of *Privateer 2*, take heart in the fact that EA haven't actually ruled out the possibility of developing a 'proper' sequel to *Privateer*, it's just that at the present time there's too much going on to get the project through the 'definitely maybe' stage.

Fire Fight

ELECTRONIC ARTS ARE WORKING ON A FAST-PACED ISOMETRIC shoot 'em up with highly detailed graphics and parallax scrolling, and it looks spookily similar to many of the shooters currently showing up on the PlayStation. But then that's not such a bad thing. Either way, the important part is that you get to blow up people and things all over the place in true 3D shoot 'em up style, and the early version of the game we saw was looking very good indeed.

We'll bring you more news on this Epic Megagames developed game in the next issue. In the meantime, you can practice fire-fighting yourself by chucking lots of flaming matches into your sofa and seeing how quickly you can put them out. (Er, that last piece of advice was purely journalistic licence and is not meant to be taken seriously.)

Magic: The Gathering

HOPING TO CASH IN ON THE WORLDWIDE success of the trading card game *Magic: The Gathering*, MicroProse have announced the latest details on their much-anticipated computer version.

Completely independent from the very low-tech card game, the digital version will have two releases: the first will be a standalone single-player adventure, designed by gaming guru Sid Meier; the second will be an on-line version that will allow players to trade cards, create powerful decks and, ultimately, play against each other. As far as we are aware, Meier's game will be aimed at beginners so that novices can get a feel for the many complexities and stratagems possible, while still retaining the flavour of the original cards.

Magic: The Gathering is the brainchild of The Wizards Of The Coast, a US gaming company who have sold over 500,000,000 cards across the globe. Just as the card series is complimented by booster packs and new editions on an ongoing basis, MicroProse hope to release add-on packs and upgrades in time with the card-based upgrades to keep the whole thing up to date.

The PC version comes complete with all existing cards built-in, as well as a dozen that have never been seen before. Trading is tentatively set to start in July.



(Right) Join the ranks of the many *Magic* anonymous gamblers worldwide.

Dispatches

+++ Perfect Assassin

As mentioned in last month's news, Frenchies Grolier (who incidentally have just moved over the water to Oxford) are working on a new style fantasy role-playing game which is set in an imaginary world and comes straight from the grey matter of top UK fantasy comic artist Kev '2000AD' Walker (who recently worked on the Stallone movie *Judge Dredd*).

Although nothing 'in-game' has been released yet, Grolier maintain that *Perfect Assassin* features some rather smart state of the art real-time 3D character animation and environment creation technology which they've been busy developing in-house over the last year or so. The game, which is scheduled for release at the end of the year, is thought to be an *Alone In The Dark*-style romp with real-time combat, multi-camera perspectives and all the usual gubbins such as full CD speech, music and sound effects.

+++ Crusader: No Regret

Electronic Arts have just announced that Origin are already hard at work on a follow-up to last year's hit *Crusader: No Remorse*. Imaginatively entitled *Crusader: No Regret*, initial reports are suggesting that it will stick to the same successful formula of the first game: ie slick hi-res graphics, plenty of weapons, explosions and things to shoot at. As far as extra bits are concerned, Origin are currently considering a multi-player network option and are also looking at beefing up the strategy side of things. It might even sport some of the rather special lighting effects developed by Bullfrog and used in *Dungeon Keeper*.

+++ Phantasmagoria 2

Sierra have split the beans and revealed that work on *Phantasmagoria 2* is well under way – and that it will be even more gory and risqué than the first 'game'. Details are as yet sketchy, but as well as loads more gratuitous sex scenes, blood and pseudo scary bits, Sierra have promised to try and get some gameplay in there somewhere. If they can manage to make it a bit more like *Gabriel Knight 2*, then maybe there's hope yet.

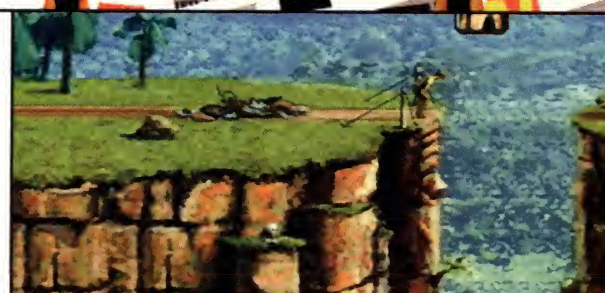
+++ FIFA 97

Surprise, surprise! EA Sports are working on the all-new *FIFA 97* and have managed to sign up John Motson (again) as well as Des 'Match Of The Day' Lynam and Andy 'whatta he say?' Gray to provide the commentary. If you're wondering why they've enlisted the services of three commentators, it's because they want it to be a bit more like *Madden* by introducing 'off the cuff' comments and after-match chit-chat. As far as the gameplay is concerned, this time round the players will be

made up of texture-mapped polygons and player control will be much improved thanks to a reworked AI and a new control system.



(Left and right) The spy's the limit. *Secret Mission* from Philips should be out by the time you read this.



Dispatches

+++ Ocean 4 Infogrames (IDST)

Two of the biggest independent software publishers, Manchester-based Ocean and Frenchies Infogrames, have merged to become the biggest European and the fifth largest games publisher in the whole wide world. The upshot of all this is that they now have a total of 400 development staff between them (not including affiliated labels) and massive development potential. Maybe then we'll see something from Ocean's internal development team Tribe this year, you never know...

+++ Even more sequels

As we go to press, Papyrus (now owned by Sierra) have announced that they are currently working on *NASCAR 2*. Impressions (also owned by Sierra) are working on *Ultimate Soccer Manager 2* and *Looking Glass* (as yet not part of the Sierra stable) have proclaimed that work is well under way on *System Shock 2* and *Star Trek: Voyager*, which incidentally is not a sequel and will be published by Viacom and not Sierra.

+++ Die Hard Trilogy

Electronic Arts have just signed up a deal with 20th Century Fox to localise and distribute all Fox Interactive's titles outside the US and Canada. One of the first titles to be released will be the keenly awaited *Die Hard Trilogy* due in May, followed by *The Simpsons Cartoon Studio*, a game based on the TV hit series *The X-Files* and the forthcoming movie *Independence Day*.

+++ Lombard RAC Rally 3

Europress are hard at work on a new rally driving game entitled *Lombard RAC Rally 3*. Not much is known about the project as yet, although the developers maintain that they are aiming to produce a game that is at least up to the graphical standards of the amazing *Sega Rally*, and even more accurate as far as car set-up, courses and drivers are concerned.

+++ TriloByte go to EA

TriloByte, the company responsible for *The 7th Guest* and the sequel title *The 11th Hour* are on the verge of signing a new deal with Electronic Arts. The company, which has suffered a set-back since this year's rather underwhelming *The 11th Hour* was released well over 12 months late, are busy working on a new "interactive movie" project entitled *Clandestine* which, if the deal goes through, will be the first product to be published by EA.

+++ Euro '96 Web site

If you want to keep up with the latest team selections and general gossip, you can now access the official Fan's Forum Internet site. Developed by ISL Worldwide on behalf of the 11 official sponsors, the site also includes a Trivia Quiz page, a Dream League and a spot-the-ball competition. The site address is <http://www.euro96.com>

Secret Mission

YOU'VE JUST WOKEN UP IN A HOTEL ROOM, FEELING LIKE DEATH AND UNABLE TO REMEMBER ANYTHING, LEAST OF all which side you're on. Your only recourse is to rely on your wits and the mysterious Natasha to help you discover who you are... Dazed and confused? We're not surprised.

If this sounds too much like yet another Saturday morning, then you'll probably find *Secret Mission*, a new spy thriller adventure game from developers Microids, just a tad snorey. On the other hand, if you've even the slightest inclination to dip into the odd Ian Fleming novel from time to time, enjoy playing point-and-click graphic adventures and puzzle solving, you might reckon it's the best thing to have happened since that time you played *Myst* in a raincoat and dark glasses in Berlin.

Featuring over 120 different locations, 30 'interactive' characters and oodles of tricky puzzles, *Secret Mission* is a twisting, turning, graphically lush affair, and could well be worth a look, but it's also coming out for the Philips' CD-i, so if your usual diet is made up of LucasArts and Sierra fare you'd best not get too excited.

Secret Mission is available now through Philips at £29.99.



Three from Sierra

Sierra have just let the cat out of the bag about three new games, all of which are scheduled for release in May/June.

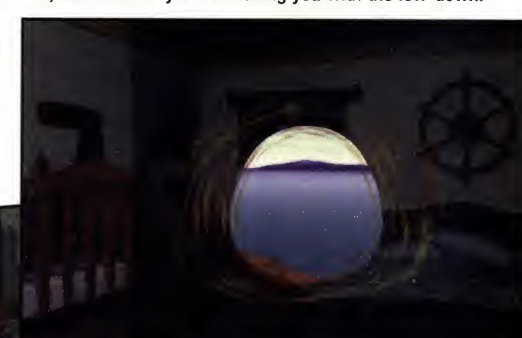
First up on the blocks is *Robert E Lee: Civil War General*, a wargame from strategy experts Impressions which is based on the American Civil War. The game gives the player the opportunity to step into the boots of the famous Confederate General and, against the odds, lead his army of Northern Virginians into battle against the Potomac Union Army. As well as being historically accurate down to the last detail and having an easy to use and intuitive interface, *Robert E Lee* also features SVGA graphics and is playable over a modem or network. And not only are there seven historical battles for your delectation, but the game features filmed historical reconstructions and will run on a 486DX.

And staying with the strategy theme, *Mission Force: Cyber Storm* is – yep – another strategy title, but this time it comes from the creators of *Earthsiege/Metaltech*. The game, which takes place in the *Metaltech* universe, features artwork from the *Earthsiege* games and uses Sierra's '3Space' graphics technology to bring the beautifully rendered HERCs to life. And as if this wasn't enough, *Cyber Storm* also has a very complex AI system and will feature multi-player network play, a random multi-level 3D terrain generator, loads of different missions and more than 25 fully-customisable HERCs. Phew!

Last but not least of the trio is *Lighthouse*, a weirdy-weirdy 3D adventure set in a... erm... lighthouse. Although it's due for release in June, Sierra haven't got too many details on it as yet, but as soon as we know any more, we'll naturally be furnishing you with the low-down.

(Above) *CyberStorm* features the art from the *Metaltech* universe and puts them in a strategy format.

(Below) Let's hope there's more to *Lighthouse* than there was to *Phantasmagoria*.



(Left and above) Nice graphics, let's hope the gameplay's up to scratch.

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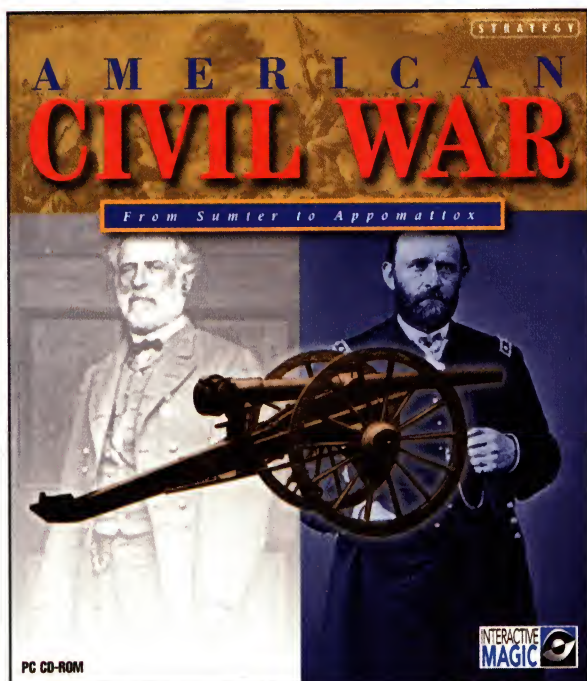
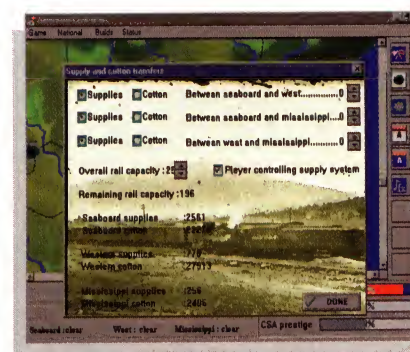
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Dispatches

+++ CM2 patch almost here

Domark promise that the patch for their massively successful football management sim *Championship Manager 2* is currently in testing and will be out by very soon. The bug fix, which will solve the problem of automatically being poached by another club, introduces a 'Manager Holiday' facility and makes the passing game more effective (among other improvements), has been in the pipeline ever since the game was released towards the end of last year to critical acclaim. Call Domark on 0181-780 2222 if you haven't got it yet.

+++ Harry the Brat Prince

Prince Harry is to get his very own personalised copy of Sony's *Total NBA* after phoning the Saturday kid's show *Live & Kicking* and asking if his head could be super-imposed on a player's body. Both Electronic Arts and Buck Palace have so far denied reports that Julia Carling has asked for Princess Di's face to be super-imposed on a golf ball in her own copy of *PGA Tour '96*.

+++ Buy while you fly

Virgin Interactive Entertainment have clinched a deal with Virgin Atlantic to sell selected games through their in-flight duty free system. Passengers will be able to buy *Creature Shock* in mid-air while *Command & Conquer* and *Screamer* will be sold on a pre-order basis so that passengers can reserve copies on their out-bound flight and pick them up on return.

+++ SimGolf

Maxis are working on a new golf game entitled *SimGolf* which will allow players to design and landscape courses thanks to a powerful 3D engine developed in-house. It also features a swing control method similar to that in Interplay's *Virtual Pool*, which requires the player to push (and pull) their mouse to hit the ball. *SimGolf* is due at the end of the year.

+++ Interaid HOVIHelp

Having trouble getting to know your way around your new software? Then consider Interaid's new computer-based training aid. *HOVIHelp* (Hands On Visually Interactive Help) is an innovative new system which runs alongside Windows and is there to assist you whenever you need it. The program allows quick access to hundreds of help pages, cross referencing using hypertext, hot-spot graphics, practical exercises and a sophisticated search function. For more details contact Interaid on 01734 617774 (e-mail interaid@gn.apc.org).

+++ Duke slips again

Duke Nukem 3D, originally due before last Christmas, has slipped back again. The shareware version released a few months ago has caused huge rumbles among the gaming fraternity, although the product (developed by the US-based company Apogee) is up against some stiff competition due to the imminent arrival of a shareware version of the vastly superior *Quake*. *Duke Nukem 3D* is slated for a full release on 17 May (allegedly).

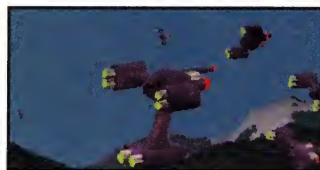
Q.A.D.

THE QUINTESSENTIAL ART OF DESTRUCTION is a whacky new shoot 'em up from a new development team, Cranberry Source. Set not too far off into the future, the planet is being invaded by vacuum cleaners, transvestite vampires and estate agents with bad wings. Tax inspectors have taken over your

computer and kidnapped your flange processor. You must disguise yourself as a fridge magnet, sort out the napkin salesman and... oh, it's just too silly to explain.

Cranberry Source reckon that the emphasis is squarely focused on "gameplay, gameplay, gameplay" and that Q.A.D. is very much "a return to the old arcade values using '90s technology". It also sports the in-house developed and first ever random scenario generator, Beyond Landscape™ and Polar Sprout™, a revolutionary landscape and display engine. Players will be able to play alone against a computer or opt for a head-to-head two-player combat mode via a network, modem or BT Wireplay.

Q.A.D. will be published by Philips and is scheduled for release in the Autumn.



LucasArts rule...

LUCASARTS HAVE ANNOUNCED DETAILS OF THREE PC RELEASES, of which two are based on the massive *Star Wars* license.

First up is *Jedi Knight*, sequel to the massive hit *Dark Forces*, and *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*, which brings the forces of good and evil together for the first time in the *Star Wars* universe; and then there's *Outlaws*, an "action-adventure" Spaghetti Western.

Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2, the multi-player sequel to *Dark Forces*, continues the story of young mercenary Kyle Katarn as he learns the way of the Jedi who must stop seven Dark Jedi from unlocking the powers of a hidden burial ground and protect the sacred order of the Force.

Jedi Knight will follow the same premise as its predecessor, but will introduce a multi-player network facility and the opportunity to indulge in some light-sabre combat. Whether LucasArts will plump for 3D polygonal characters (à la *Quake*) or stick with detailed bitmaps is as yet unclear, although considering how good the original engine was, it would be fair to expect something rather special.

Just how fantastic *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* will be should be pretty self-evident to anyone who's played either of the original games. LucasArts have yet to confirm the extent to which they've improved the flight model, graphics, mission structure and so on, just as they've yet to reveal just how many players the game will support; however, fans should relish the chance to go head-to-head against a chum at the helm of a TIE Fighter in the *Star Wars* universe.

Finally, there's *Outlaws*, an adventure game inspired by the Sergio Leone Spaghetti Westerns of the '60s. Unlike the popular *Full Throttle* released last year, they've switched to a "cinematic" first-person view that allows the player to fully explore the rich, character-filled environment. As well as a multi-player/network facility, there will be three gameplay variations and a juicy plot based on a mysterious loner who rides into town seeking vengeance against a power-hungry railroad baron and his posse of murderous gun-toting thugs. So, in other words, it should be rather good: *System Shock* meets *Full Throttle* hopefully.



(Above) By the way, this one is *Outlaw*.

The Gene Machine

THE point-and-click adventure formerly known as *Sherrington Fox* from developers Divide by Zero (the team responsible for *Innocent Until Caught* and *The Orion Conspiracy*) has now changed the game's moniker to *The Gene Machine* and rescheduled its release for June.

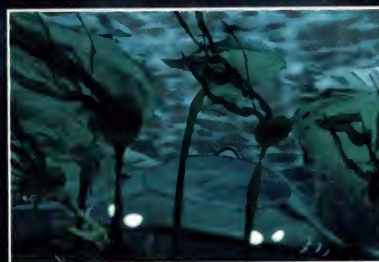
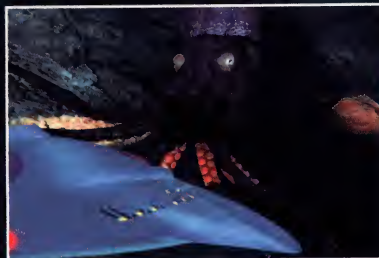
Set in 19th Century England, the player controls both the movement and actions of true Brit and gentleman's hero Piers and his trusty manservant Mossop. Their mission is to seek out the evil Dr Dinsey – creator of the *Gene Machine*, a diabolical device that can combine two different species to create horrific mutations. The dastardly Doctor's main ambition is to engineer an army of terrible creatures that he can lead to take over the world. Piers and his faithful sidekick must travel the world using their wits to thwart the evil Doctor's plans.

As well as featuring over 120 beautifully hand-drawn locations and exquisitely rendered characters, the game 'stars' the voices of Sean Pertwee and Jeff 'George in *Drop The Dead Donkey*' Rawle. The script was edited by Mark Leigh and Mike Lepine, the chaps behind 'How To Be A Complete Bastard' and 'The Complete Revenge Kit' and numerous TV comedy sketches, so *The Gene Machine* should at the very least be mildly entertaining, in a *Discworld/Monkey Island* kind of way. Who knows, it could even join the elite society of games that are considered genuinely funny.

The Gene Machine is due for release in June from Vic Tokai.

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AT HOME WITH... CRITERION STUDIOS

When we told Charlie Brooker that we were sending him on an all-expenses-paid trip to the Canary Islands to check out a new software house called Criterion Studios, he leapt at the chance. But we were lying. Tee hee.

CRITERION STUDIOS. I DOUBT YOU'VE ever heard of them. Are they a minor little software house, restricting themselves only to the release of obscure hairy-palmer wargames or bakery management simulators? No. Oh, perhaps they've just changed their name - were they once called 'Microsoft'? Nope. Hmmm. Then maybe - just maybe - they're a magical, invisible game developer that appears upon the earth once every 1000 years only to vanish again in the blink of an eye? Now you're just being silly.

The reason you won't have heard of Criterion Studios is quite simple - you won't have seen or played any of their games yet. You may, however, have already experienced some of their handiwork: they were responsible for 'RenderWare', a powerful real-time 3D graphics engine for the PC. It's been used for all



This is David Lau-Kee, Criterion's head honcho. He smiles a lot more in real life. Honest.

(Below) Here's an 'artist's impression' of what *Dive* should eventually look like.

kinds of things, from action games through to the new VRML plug-ins for Netscape Navigator. And you will have definitely heard of their parent company, Canon (y'know, the one that goes, "If Anyone Can Canon Cancan Canon Can Can" - or something).

Upon arrival at their Guildford HQ (after driving around in confused circles like a blind flailing tourist), I was introduced to Criterion PR boss Maria Johnson, and overall head guy David Lau-Kee. Following a brief excursion to a nearby watering hole (apparently a no-go Criterion zone after a recent raucous booze-up there), I was given a glimpse of things to come.

The first thing you notice about Criterion's offices is just how much empty space there is. There's enough room to stage a full-on five-a-side soccer tourney in there. Canon clearly have faith in Criterion's ability to deliver some grade AAA titles, and expansion plans are already in progress. Lau-Kee realises that their first batch of releases are utterly crucial, as it's these which will either make or break the Criterion brand name.

As you might expect from a company whose foundations have been built upon the strength of a piece of 3D software, there aren't any 2D platform games in the offing. What we have instead is a trio of three-dimensional action games

which are already looking

pretty darn tasty. First for release is a game based loosely on the Williams arcade classic *Defender* (David's all-time favourite). *Scorched Planet*, as it will be called, sees the player battling furiously across a series of landscapes to save a race of humanoid planet-dwellers from a nightmarish cast of marauding alien beasts known as the Voraxians.

Visually it's quite similar to *Magic Carpet* or *Terminal Velocity*, although there's a far greater strategic element to the gameplay than you might think. David is keen to stress the tactical elements at work. In order to emerge victorious, the player needs to train troops, trick the invaders into attacking the wrong areas, and use a variety of different vehicles. The main craft you control is also capable of morphing from a flying fighter craft into a kind of armoured dune buggy, and working out when and where to morph is also of the utmost importance. The engine, naturally, is based on the RenderWare system, allowing for all manner of fancy effects such as real-time shadows and highly realistic terrain. As is more or less mandatory for 3D shoot 'em ups these days, it also sports a network link-up mode, enabling up to eight players to slug it out in the intergalactic skies.

Underwaterworld

Next we peek at Criterion's second development strategy game, featuring plenty of watery atmosphere and some of the prettiest polygon fish you're ever likely to see. Provisionally titled *Dive*, it all revolves around a miniature undersea world (all the people are about an inch in height) which is in the midst of a disruptive civil war. To make matters even worse, the sea in which they live is continually being polluted by - yep - the rest of mankind. Your mission, should you accept it, is to bring harmony to your world while simultaneously persuading the gargantuan land-dwellers upstairs to clean up their act. No doubt comparisons will be drawn with Bullfrog's forthcoming *Creation* (which is also set underwater), although the quality of the visuals in the unfinished version of *Dive* mean that Guildford's other software house will have to work pretty damn hard to come out on top.

It's now time for David to reveal his trump card. The final title pencilled in for release is *Aqua Tak*, an out-and-out racing game - "Ridge Racer with powerboats," as David puts it, which runs at a sickeningly smooth frame rate in super-crisp 640x480 resolution, without the assistance of one of those expensive and risky investments, the 3D accelerator card. Lawks.

The game itself is set in a future world where poor people are regarded as the lowest form of life and are mercilessly kept in their place by the upper-class regime (a kind of 'Thatcher World' as it were). The only way a pauper can strike it rich is by entering into a violent, to-the-death sporting tournament such as the popular powerboat race. The winner reaps great rewards - the losers tend to wind up as fish food. Aside from the ability to ram fellow racers into perilous rockfaces, there are added distractions in the form of over-enthusiastic, sadistic spectators looking to get a bit of target practice in for their next skeet shoot. Although there's clearly plenty of work still to be done - the element of competition isn't there yet - it looks like it might create a bit of a stir when it finally appears.

So, that's Criterion. New Kids on the Block, as it were. From the evidence on offer, they're well aware that new faces need something exciting if they want to be noticed, and here's hoping that the finished products turn out as classy as the early stages indicate. The first title, *Scorched Planet*, is out soon, so prepare yourself for an outrageously full-bodied review in a forthcoming issue, y'all. **Z**

(Far right) This is Skitz, Criterion's canine mascot. He may look cute and harmless, but he's got incredibly sharp teeth and won't hesitate to use them. Reminds me of a girl I went out with once...


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7th LEVEL

Into The Shadows

Into The Shadows is one of those games that's been lingering around on the periphery for more than a year. *Zone* takes an early look at a game that mixes genres and takes the polygon-based style of playing to a new level. But will it turn out to be the next really big thing?



A YEAR AGO, SCAVENGER SUDDENLY appeared out of nowhere. There was no fanfare, no bullshit, no hype... they were just suddenly there. They had a big stand at E3 in Los Angeles (the big games industry show which is held every May), and not only did they surprise everyone with their presence, the biggest shocker up their sleeve was that they had what many considered to be the 'game of the show'.

Into The Shadows is the game on which Scavenger have forged their reputation, and which has rocketed them to 'hot developer' status virtually overnight, with the result that every publisher under the sun was scrabbling for a chance to distribute their games. And quite rightly so – despite some considerable secrecy, information about *Into The Shadows* (and some of the team's other products) soon leaked out to an eager, salivating press.

So here we are... salivating

It's not often that something comes along that makes everyone sit up and pay serious attention. As far as I can remember, apart from *Quake*, the last game to make us all a bit gooey in our secret places was *Dungeon Keeper* and before that, ooh, er... probably the awesome *Command & Conquer*. The whole gooey thing probably only happens two or three times a year, so it's safe to say that *Into The Shadows* is keeping some pretty top-notch company.

But what is it actually? For ages now

Product details

Developer: Scavenger

Publisher: GT Interactive

Telephone: 0171-258 3791

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: Summer/Autumn



(Above) All the graphics are in hi-res, 24-bit colour and will allegedly run at 30fps. Splendid, eh?



magazines have been printing vague and ambiguous news stories about the thing (ourselves included), but in reality, no one had a bloody clue. We knew it was pretty hot in the old texture-mapped polygon area, but it was far from clear as to whether or not it would be a *Quake/Duke Nukem* protégé or something a little different. To be honest, if it had been the former we

almost certainly would not have bothered with it, as let's face it – we hardly need any more of the damn things, do we? No, fortunately it does have something new to offer... and while it might be ambitious, it's definitely different.

As is the trend with PC games at the moment, the emphasis here is on action-based gameplay as opposed to the more

(Left) Apparently a large army of different creatures appear throughout the game, but as yet it isn't certain whether they'll attack you more than one at a time.



Extreme cleverness

Scavenger have been keen to point out how much cleverer their software is than other people's stuff. Okay, it looks damn pretty when you see the screenshots, but then when you see it moving it's even better.

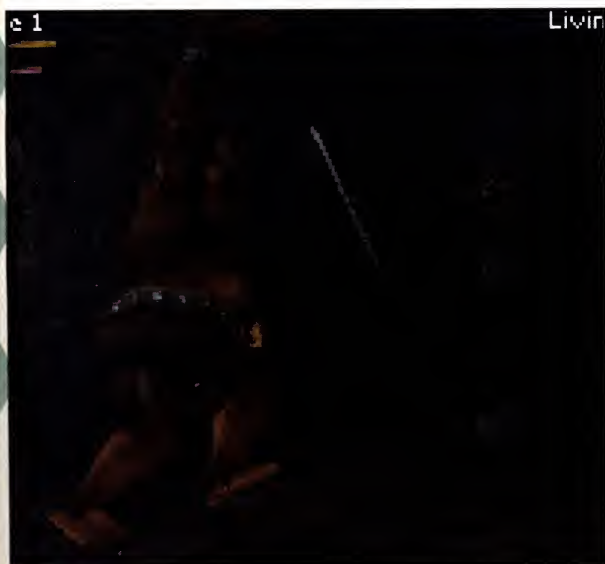
On the animation side, the team has been working towards sustaining a frame rate of 30fps in hi-res on most adequately equipped Pentium PCs. Quite what 'adequately equipped' means is unclear... let's hope they mean a P75, eh? They probably don't though; it wouldn't be unreasonable to expect a good performance from a P90 with 16Mb.

Now this is all fine and pretty clever in itself... but the bonus is that it gets even better. Scavenger are awfully eager to highlight the fact that *Into The Shadows* has also been produced to take advantage of the 24-bit colour modes offered by most modern graphics cards, meaning that everything runs in thousands of colours as opposed to just 256. This has two knock-on effects – firstly (and most obviously) things look more realistic, and secondly the polygon objects can be made to look far less angular and 'polygon-y' by the use of anti-aliasing on the edges. So that's hi-res, 24-bit colour, polygon-generated environments and characters running around at 30fps on a Pentium. Zoiks.

Beyond this, we're also assured that everything has been modelled in 'true' 3D. This means that the whole caboodle occupies three-dimensional space within the gaming environment and all collisions, movements, battles and other er... stuff goes on as you would expect it to, if you take my meaning. Things aren't 2D like they are in *Doom*... they're more on a par with what you'd find in *Quake*, only from what we've seen the characters look far more detailed.

traditional fare – but it achieves this with a particularly stylish slant.

If I was forced to make a very basic comment regarding the style of *Into The Shadows*, I'd have to say that it's a cross between *Fade To Black* and *FX Fighter* except that it takes place in a mediaeval-cum-fantasy setting. Comprenez? It has some awesome texture-mapped



(Above and far right) Your warrior starts off fighting it out dressed in casual clobber, but later on he'll find bits of armour and other new weapons with which to defend himself.

(Below) "I bet it you were the swine who cleaned out the fridge... You fat bastard, you fat bastard," etc.

polygons and boasts some of the cleverest and fanciest features we've seen for a long time. Imagine that sort of roaming camera feel from *Fade To Black* and then try to visualise a bunch of characters that could've been pulled straight out of something like *Tekken* or that new arcade game *Soul Edge*. Once you've got this sort of basic graphical quality firmly lodged in your brain, we can finally start thinking about the all-important gameplay...

Okay, it looks nice... but what's it about?

Basically you play a young warrior type who enters a castle in search of adventure. On walking in, you find that the gameplay takes on two distinct values. At face value it's almost a 3D

version of *Golden Axe* or *Final Fight* in that it's a full-blown beat 'em up where you walk from scrap to scrap picking up new weapons (such as swords, axes and other such deadly instruments of mediaeval nastiness) and bits of armour along the way. Fair enough... it's an original

approach, I'll certainly give it that. Underneath this fairly simplistic premise there is also the 'adventure' element where you have to explore the castle to solve a bunch of different puzzles which reward you with various items. I suppose it's quite similar to a role-playing game where all the combat is

fought out just like it is in a top-



Direct draw cleverness

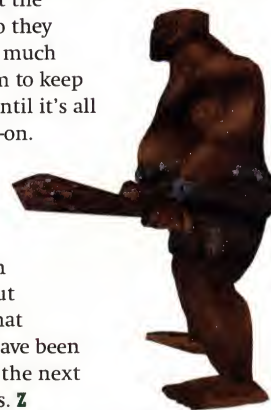
Although *Into The Shadows* has been designed as both a DOS and Windows 95 product, it's interesting to see that it is one of the first games to be specifically designed with Microsoft's new Direct Draw software tool. But what significance does this hold for you? Well, basically it means that a) people with Windows 95 will enjoy a far better deal, and that b) unless you've got a fairly good graphics card (in other words something that has more than 1Mb on board) it's going to be slower than a really slow thing that's really let itself go and decided to take things easy.



notch beat 'em up. It all sounds pretty F.A.B. really, wouldn't you agree?

However, we have absolutely no idea how long we're going to have to wait for it. Much like the guys at iD, Scavenger are keen to make sure that their game is the best it can possibly be. They know that the technology they have is in advance of virtually anything else

out there at the moment, so they have pretty much the freedom to keep tweaking until it's all totally spot-on. Obviously we'll keep you informed about when it will be out and just what extra bits have been added over the next few months. Z



Superheroes

Rob Tribe always fancied wearing his pants outside his trousers, and now he can. **SuperStain** may not be the most convincing of superheroes, but boy are his pants dirty.



THE YEAR IS 2091. PLANET EARTH is now under the rule of super-powered mutants who, by virtue of their super-powers, wreak havoc across the world in a way that only super-powered mutants can. The only thing standing in their way is you.

I know what you're thinking, "What can I, a mere mortal armed only with this copy of *PC Zone*, do against mutated super-evil?" Well, with your new super-powers you could take this copy of *Zone* and shove it so far up a piece of mutated scum's arse that he would have to swallow just to turn the pages. That's right, this game bestows super-powers upon you; you will now be able to bend iron bars just by blowing on them, leap tall buildings and catch bullets slap bang in the middle of your super-grin (NB: You can't actually do anything of

(Above) When all seems lost, boxes may be your best defence.

the sort, any attempt will result in three things – ridicule, injury or death).

This is the premise behind *Superheroes*, the new X-COM-style game from MicroProse which will only be available for Windows 95. You are the leader of a group of super-people who are out to thwart the criminals from three organisations: Tech Lords, The Claw and The Shadowyn. Disturbed by the destruction unleashed by the three criminal groups, five powerful and wealthy individuals have formed the Star Council to combat the growing problem. However, bearing in mind that Nostradamus has predicted that the top five most powerful and wealthy people in America in 2091 will be Macaulay Culken, Bill Gates, Elvis, Fergie and Bubbles the chimpanzee, boy, are we in trouble.

You have the Power!

As you are new to all this superhero business, you will have the opportunity to create your own super-ego and develop skills such as martial arts prowess and acrobatic abilities. You'll have the chance to learn and improve on new super-powers such as the much-envied force field and flight! Or the impatient can dive straight in by picking one of the 24 pre-created super-sprites.

Superheroes promises to be a uniting

experience, allowing head-to-head play over a network or modem. This isn't just a beat 'em up – it will also draw on all your special planning and strategy skills. Selecting which missions to pursue and which characters should pursue them will call for qualities that no amount of x-ray vision or spidey sense can give you.

Your fully-rendered super-people will clash heads in an isometric 3D environment, looking to enhance their skills with each villain they clobber in an increasingly super-oriented way. The more power you get, the more super you become. Perhaps it won't be long before you can do without Culkin et al. Maybe the world would be better off without them? Don't believe the comics or *The New Adventures Of Superman* – you don't have to be virtuous to be a super hero. And besides, with all that power you could take over the world. Easy. **Z**

Product details

Developer: MicroProse

Publisher: MicroProse

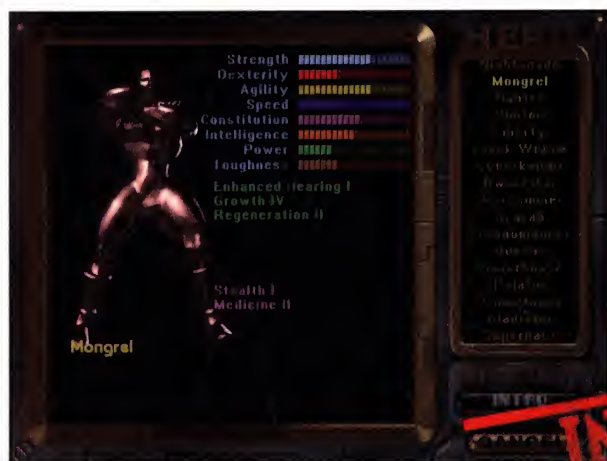
Telephone: 01454 893893

Format: CD-ROM (Windows 95 required)

Release date: September

(Below) Mongrel: The creation of a madman.

(Right) Two down and one to go! Get ready with these fireballs.



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DESPITE SPENDING LAST YEAR BEING REASONABLY quiet, 7th Level are now building up for a full scale assault on the UK games market with *Arcade America* already in the shops and Monty Python's *Quest For The Holy Grail* set to be released any day now. To celebrate this in a vulgar display of wad waving and to give you lot something to slaver over, we've got a rather jolly splendid MJN PC to give away very much like the one pictured here. To get your hands on this glorious P90 with all the trimmings all you have to do is go through the usual procedure of answering a bunch of ridiculous questions, sending in your entries and then waiting with baited breath to find out if you've won or not.

Should you not be lucky enough to win the PC, we also have ten runners-up copies of *Arcade America* to give away.

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Name:

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Obviously we'll endeavour to remove the *Arcade America* picture from the screen before we dispatch the prize, as this could cause some problems if you want to actually use the PC for anything.

1 7th Level is almost ready to release a game about the *Holy Grail*. On which film is it based?

- a) Excalibur b) Cheech and Chong c) Monty Python's *Quest For The Holy Grail*

2 Which of the following games ISN'T a 7th Level product?

- a) *Arcade America* b) *Battle Beast* c) *Fast Attack*

3 What sort of a game is *Arcade America*?

- a) Flight simulation b) Platform game c) Racing sim

Rules: All entries must be received by Tuesday 28 May 1996. No correspondence will be entered into, so if you ring up we'll get your name and then set fire to your entry form. The editor's decision is final and the winners will be notified by post. All other usual restrictions apply.

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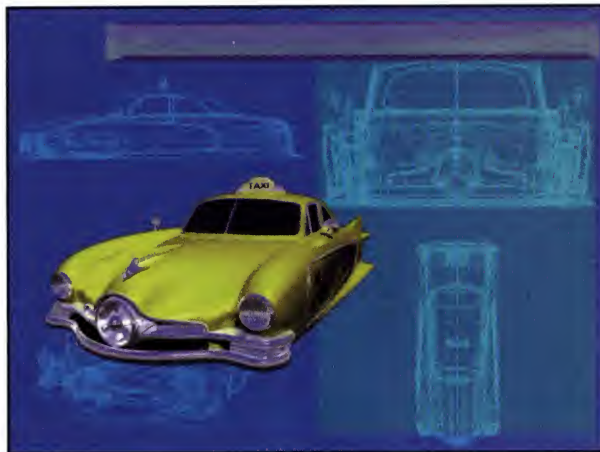
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Having taken the gaming world by storm with *UFO: Enemy Unknown*, and followed it up with the equally successful *X-COM: Terror Of The Deep*, MicroProse are now turning the whole *X-COM* saga on its head by giving the game a complete overhaul for the next instalment in the series. Over the next few months, our resident *X-COM* addict Chris Anderson will be travelling to Chipping Sodbury to not only keep tabs on how the whole thing's going, but also to tell everyone to *please* hurry up.



X-COM: Apocalypse

Part One

I REMEMBER GETTING A PHONE CALL from Laurence Scotford (a former *Zone* editor bod), in which he said something like: "Chris, we've got this strategy thing with aliens in it from MicroProse, do you want to have a look at it?" I said, "Okay, why not?" Laurence despatched it off to me in a jiffy bag,

and when it arrived the next day I spent a few hours playing it, thinking it was pretty good. By the end of the next day it had gone from pretty good to bloody good. The day after that I'd given up on bloody good and moved on to absolutely amazing. *UFO: Enemy Unknown* is one of the very few games I have played that I

(Above) Turbo power to your joystick with bigger and more powerful vehicles at your disposal.

(Below) Leave the Geoscape behind and go cruising through the Cityscape instead

simply couldn't leave alone until I had finished it. Addictive? Not much! It had everything you could ever possibly want from a good strategy game, and truckloads more besides. The sequel, *Terror From The Deep*, was basically more of the same, except underwater. This would have been enough to kill off most sequels but such was the high playability factor of the original, *X-COM* fans were happy just to have tons more levels with a few visual differences. *X-COM: Apocalypse*, the game we will be following from its very beginnings right through to an exclusive review of the finished product, is going to be a different kettle of fish altogether.

The best gets better

Even at this very early stage of development I can see vast improvements over the original game. The graphics are in gorgeous SVGA, with highly detailed sprites reminiscent of Origin's *Crusader* (one of the best-looking action titles



IN PRODUCTION



Product details

Developer: MicroProse
Publisher: MicroProse
Telephone: 01454 893893
Format: CD-ROM



powerful. You will be able to customise the vehicles by calling up a 3D model and equipping it as you see fit. For example, you will be able to kit out an attack craft from a large selection of engines, weapons, power packs, sensor arrays and so on, allowing you to hone it to perfection for the task you have in mind. Cool or what, eh!

Sorry, two won't do

Sadly, two pages doesn't really offer enough room for exploring in any great detail the many changes that MicroProse have up their sleeves. But fear not, because every aspect of the game will be coming under the *Zone* microscope in the coming months. In the next issue I'll be talking to the people actually working on the project, and taking a closer look at the different characters, weapons and vehicles, and how they all fit into the great scheme of things. See you next month! **z**



around). The Geoscape has disappeared and been replaced with a much more complex Cityscape, which is home to tons of characters, all leading lives of their own. In addition to the existing turn-based combat scenes, MicroProse will be adding a real-time option, which will not only make the combat sequences far more exciting, but will also bring a strong arcade factor to this part of the game while retaining the strategic element of the last one. The X-COM spacecraft and vehicles will be bigger, more complex and more

Cruising the Cityscape

In the original game, when you weren't fighting you spent most of your time either staring at the Geoscape waiting for some aliens to show up, or on the resource management screen, messing about with money and research and stuff.

In *X-COM: Apocalypse*, however, you will spend most of your time on the Cityscape, an altogether more interesting place. Cityscape is a 3D isometric landscape which shows you everything going on within the city of Megalopolis (the only habitable place left on earth, and the site of the X-COM HQ). From this display you can direct the X-COM agents to carry out your orders and send them off to various destinations – you can even re-route them if you change your mind by clicking on them. You can also access all other game screens from this point, such as the ones for finance and resource management. You might choose to even check out individual buildings to find out who they belong to. This is basically a much bigger and more varied and detailed version of the original Geoscape and resource management screens, and will bring a whole new dimension to the overall gameplay.



(Above left) The weapons in *Apocalypse* are now much more sophisticated and powerful. We'll be taking a closer look at these next month.

(Above) With lots of different buildings in Megalopolis, you can be a nosy parker and find out who lives in them and what they do.

(Left) Here's an X-COM agent fully kitted out in shiny new armour.

(Below) It's a tank, Frank – but the best part is you customise it however you see fit. Blow 'em away, Jose!

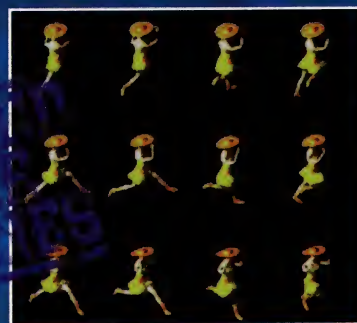


Body language: smart sprites

Every single sprite in the game has 24 frames of animation for every movement they make, such as running, walking and crawling and for every direction: forwards, backwards and so on, adding up to a total of 11,000 frames of animation for each sprite in the game. This gives them incredibly realistic movement.

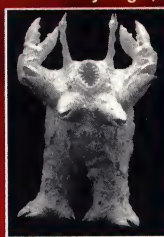


And as if this wasn't enough, the sprites are made up of 'components' such as arms, legs etc, that all move differently. By combining all these components in varying ways, the game's designers can create characters that all look as though they have their own personal body language. Now that's smart!

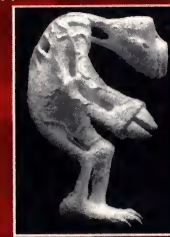


Monsters in the making

To create the various alien beasts in the game, MicroProse commissioned an artist to make an original plasticine model for each one. All these models were then photographed from every angle, scanned in, and texture-mapped. All the models



I've witnessed so far look suitably weird and alien-like, and we'll be looking at the finished versions in a couple of month's time. MicroProse have promised they will be absolutely faberoo!



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Hind

IN PRODUCTION

(Right) Grab your goggles and shrug on that flying jacket! The overall appearance is similar to *Apache*, if a little crisper.



DIGITAL INTEGRATION, YOU MAY recall, have been receiving accolades (not least from me) for the really rather splendid *Apache Longbow*. Well it seems that they had some talent going spare, so after rolling out the bug fixes for *Apache*, they've gone on to produce something a little more interesting. It's all very well doing the *Apache*, but the trouble is everybody else has done it as well. Although helicopters currently appear to be terribly fashionable (dahling) – which is good news as far as I'm concerned – there are only so many near-identical games that the market can carry. So

DI have decided to take a different tack, and the result of their labours is *Hind*.

Somebody once suggested that combat helicopters could be likened to couriers cycling around town. You have the cyclists in their Hughes Defenders, delivering your lightweight packages over short distances at the risk of being sent flying by pesky pedestrians. Then you have the maniac bikers in their *Apaches*, delivering average packages over longer distances and occasionally getting knocked off their wheels by cars. If you continue this analogy, then the dirty great Parcel Force artic is the *Hind*. Basically, it will despatch a whole stack of parcels – and not just yours – wherever you like, squashing anything that dares get in the way.

The *Hind* is a proper gunship

Digital Integration have been working on the follow-up to *Apache Longbow* for quite some time. **Simon Bradley**, our resident propeller head, dons his flying goggles and cheesey grin to have a quick shuft.



helicopter. It is as ugly as sin, handles like a bus and scares the hell out of anyone on the receiving end. But better than that, it carries more than just pointy things – it carries troops as well. It has often been said that no matter how tough your aircraft might be, you can't capture and hold ground without troops. Although to some extent events in the Gulf War proved that this isn't always true, fundamentally the fact remains that the grubby business of actually holding land belongs to soldiers, not airmen.

DI offer you the opportunity to fly a *Hind-E*, which is the main version in service with the Russian/Soviet forces. The *Hind-E* saw a great deal of action in Afghanistan, as indeed did most other Soviet kit, and it proved itself to be particularly handy for certain types of mission. Unfortunately, it also proved spectacularly crap at others. You get the chance to lay minefields, pick up casualties, insert Spetznatz troops, take out vehicle convoys and recover troops after missions. *Hind* is very good at these. You also get to go up against other helicopters, especially





Product details

Developer: Digital Integration

Publisher: Digital Integration

Telephone: 01276 684959

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: Summer

the Apache. Let's be honest – the Hind is not a dogfighter. It's like going rallying in a Transit – a bit of a laugh but at the end of the day hardly competitive.

With Hind-sight...

The idea of putting a helicopter with a cargo capacity into a game isn't a new concept. *LHX* and *Gunship 2000* both had the Blackhawk, and *LHX* certainly had missions where you had to pick up casualties or troops. The real difference with *Hind* however is the way that the troops are handled: rather than just standing there waiting for you, soldiers here will dig in, provide covering fire, and get off their arses to come to you. Not just any old how, either. These guys will go round the aircraft, avoiding the tail rotor, and come in through the door. Properly. In fact, if you look from outside, you will see the doors open and the men climb in. Each figure is animated separately, and you can even tell what weapon the enemy is about to fire at you by the way he is holding it. The jury is still out as to how people will react when killed – they will probably just keel over in an untidy sort of fashion, so those looking for *Doom*-style gore will be disappointed.

Similarly, although there will be area denial missions, you can forget about any opportunities to murder civilians. Well, for the moment anyway.

You will have at least three campaign areas to rampage around in. Afghanistan is probably the most controversial, and DI have erred on the side of caution by basing it on a historical campaign, so there are no grounds for accusations of them being biased. There is a campaign in one of the breakaway republics (which is fairly dodgy ground if you want to be politically correct), but probably the most likely scenario here; there's a Korean campaign too, which is where air-to-air action will come in. This is also where you can expect head to head multi-player sessions to take place.

Okay Monty, I'm going in

As you can see from the screenshots, the graphics are very close to those in *Apache*. Nothing wrong there I suppose, and there's an advantage in that the two games can be linked and played against each other. World landmarks are very well detailed, and the sizing seems about right. The flight model is attracting a lot of attention, and DI even enlisted the assistance of a real chopper pilot who has actually flown a Hind to fine-tune it. Sadly, I haven't got my mitts on the finished (or even tuned) article yet, and can only report that it currently feels fundamentally okay although it still needs a lot of work.

Most importantly for a simulator of this genre, there will be proper networking options from day one, although sadly there still won't be

(Above) Don't understand Cyrillic? You'd better read the manual before flying.

(Below) Quick! Must get to the loo before I wet me knickers!

any facilities for four-player, two-aircraft play. Apparently this is just too much to handle at present, although it may be possible later. Normal modem and serial options are also included, and linking *Apache* and *Hind* together for some head-to-head action is a fairly simple matter. So far, as with *Apache*, there are no networked co-operative facilities in place.

In short, *Hind* looks like a really interesting simulator. To many of you



(Below left) The Invisible Man has been drafted in to fly the Apache in the single-player scenarios.

(Below) All the people are fully animated and interact with each other as well as the scenery.

this is probably like saying, "Gosh, what a thrilling party political broadcast," but take my word for it that a wealth of new features have been thrown in which could well end up taking the simulator market in a new direction. Heavily involving ground troops in the action is the first step towards an air and land campaign played over a network which could genuinely provide something for almost everyone. **Z**



Masters of Orion 2

Paul Presley was overwhelmed by *Ascendancy*... and after a look at how promising challenger *Masters Of Orion 2* is shaping up, we thought it best to strap him to a chair for his own safety. Nurse! The medication!

Product details

Developer: SimTex Software

Publisher: MicroProse

Telephone: 01454 893893

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: June



(Left) The Elerians. I've a few, erm, treaties I'd like to offer them, if you know what I mean. Hur, hur. (What is this? Carry On Captions? - Ed.)

HUMOUR ME NOW AND CAST YOUR minds back to issue 32, and you may remember my rumblings and ruminations over a game called *Ascendancy*. I passed comment on its addictive nature, its all-encompassing strategy elements and playability that was surpassed by none. Well, it's about to be surpassed now, by *Masters Of Orion 2*. A sequel yes, but a sequel to the only

game that could perhaps be said to have been a direct influenced on the design of *Ascendancy* - after all, it shared very similar themes of space exploration and colonising and was released some 19 months earlier.

But don't get me wrong, I'm not suggesting that *Ascendancy* borrowed certain elements from *Orion 1*. Far from it: *Ascendancy* was far superior, much

deeper and infinitely more intelligent and playable. All in all, space colonisation is space colonisation - as with golfing games, there are only so many ways you can simulate it and so there will inevitably be some crossovers.

Anyway, what I'm trying to say is that while *Masters Of Orion 2* is in many ways similar to *Ascendancy* in its themes and practices, it actually promises much more in terms of strategic gameplay and the actual execution of said themes. Is that safe? (Yes. Now where do we send the bill? - PC Zone lawyers.)

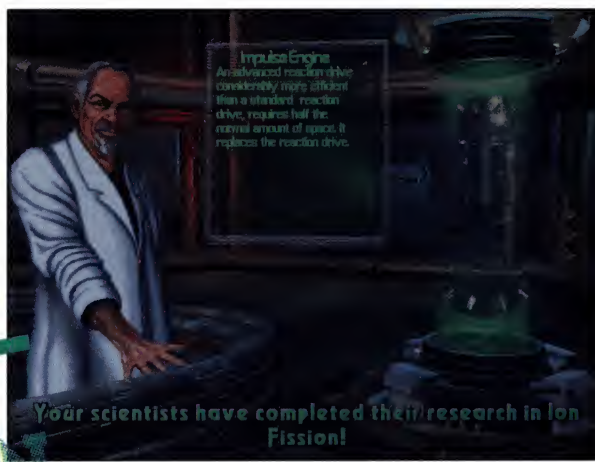
Improvements

Anyone who remembers the original *Masters Of Orion* must have a very good memory. The sequel has been revamped, reshaped, restructured, reassembled, revitalised, reversed, reanimated and reprogrammed in order to create a game that has all of the elements that won the first title numerous awards (including Strategy Game Of The Year 1993 in America), but in an altogether more attractive and challenging environment. By which I mean the graphics have improved - which is as we would have hoped really, since the original has already celebrated its third birthday. Now we have majestic SVGA screens depicting alien races, breathtaking animations, fully detailed space combat and planet development scenes and... well, you get the idea.



(Left) The galaxy map has fully customisable windows, more detailed planetary displays and special instructions to let Mrs Space Conquestor know how to fold it up properly.

(Below) Sean Connery tries out a new career in engineering.



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(Left) Advanced technology allows you to develop everything from killer ships to lethal weaponry to a new and better kind of pop-up toaster that doesn't burn the bread on one side while leaving the other cold.

But it's not just the look of the game that's been overhauled, the whole thing has been upgraded, through from the strategic element to the control system. You now have more than a dozen alien races to deal with, full land resource problems to overcome, a raft of new technology to research and, perhaps the most intriguingly bit of all, a race of utter xenophobes that make the Borg's attempts at assimilation look like a local jumble sale since they have about as much interest in the affairs of other races as the French.

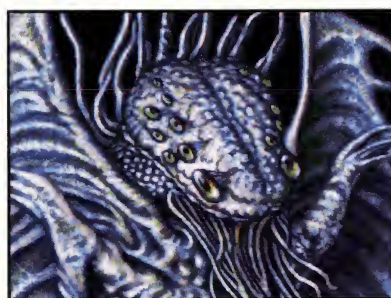
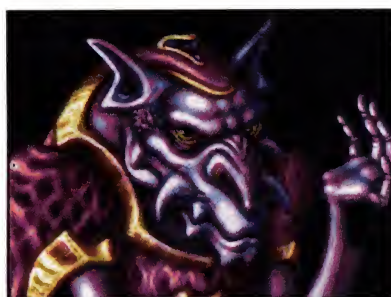
Better? You bet!

All of these improvements alone would combine to make a pretty good game, but developers SimTex haven't stopped there. After all, why just program in a load of different alien artificial intelligence routines when you can throw in a network option and allow the infinite variety of human minds to control your enemies' actions as well? Yup, there's no reason at all, which is why *Masters Of Orion 2* has both a modem head-to-head version and a networkable eight-player version, allowing for an unparalleled level of challenge in a strategy game (but one that I reckon you can be sure is going to be included in just about every other forthcoming strategy title from here to eternity).

Another new feature is the inclusion

of Leaders, talented freelancers that hire their services out to players. You can sign them up to lead your spacecraft, head up battles, take care of planets and so on, adding all sorts of variables into the strategic mix.

It's an odds-on favourite that *Masters Of Orion 2* will snatch the space strategy crown away from *Ascendancy*. At the time of writing, the manual space combat sections had yet to be implemented, so we'll just have to wait and see how this most crucial of aspects affects things. If the rest is anything to go by though, it should be pretty smart. **Z**



Space: a fact

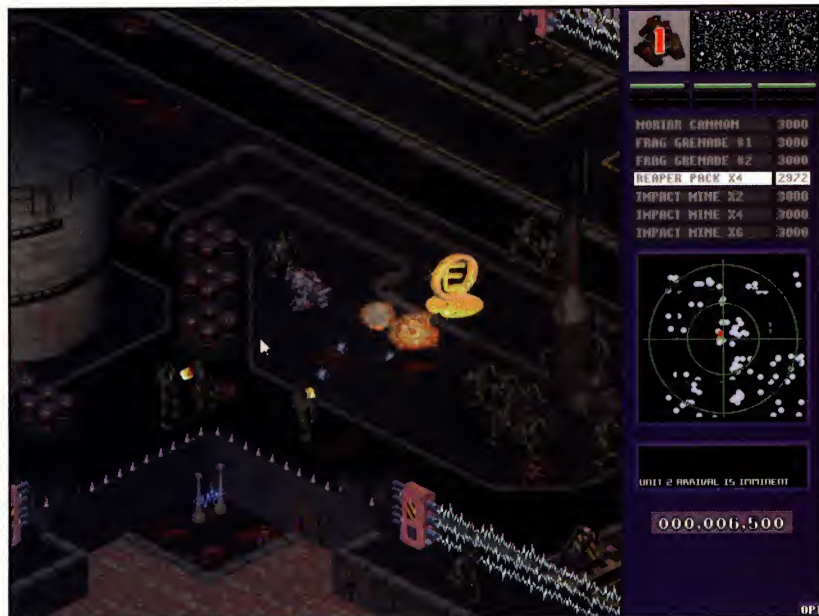
The well known quote "In space, no one can hear you scream" is a lie. Although in deep space noise is non-existent, should you find yourself floating in a low planetary orbit (the section of ether that holds satellites, the shuttle and Keith Richard's thought patterns), you'll be able to hear a low throbbing noise. But if you *did* find yourself floating in a low planetary orbit you would be dead, so you wouldn't hear anything. Maybe they're right then. Hum.

(Left) Just some of the weird alien races to look forward to.

Just
WASTED
£40
on a
GAME
that
SUCKS?
Never
mind...

Mirage unveil their first game in ages that doesn't have "Rise Of..." in its title. Unsurprisingly though, the thing is still full to overflowing with robots. John Davison zooms in for an extreme close-up and wonders why everyone there is so obsessed.

Mayhem



(Left) Everything has a particularly 'rendered' look about it – even the icon that you have to pick up as salvage in order to gain cash.

Product details

Developer: Mirage Technologies

Publisher: GT Interactive

Telephone: 0171-258 3791

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: Autumn

Render-tastic

As with Mirage's previous titles (the *Rise Of The Robots* games), all of the objects in *Mayhem* were first rendered in 3D Studio. The frames from these renderings (which are also used in extensive cut-scenes) were then scaled down and used as sprites and objects in the game itself.

MIRAGE TECHNOLOGIES ARE STILL a relatively small development team and publisher based 'ooperth' in sunny Congleton in Cheshire. Famed for the ...*Robots* titles, which sparked more vehement nit-picking than any other computer game in history, they are now turning their attention towards something that doesn't involve robots beating the shit out of one another... er, by way of a change, this one involves robots shooting at each other with guns and rockets and missiles and lasers and tactical nuclear weapons and stuff. Neat, eh?

Set, as ever, in the future, *Mayhem* is best described as a 'thinking person's shoot 'em up'. It blends the frenetic and gland-titillating action of something like *Doom* and stuffs it into a playing environment that immediately makes you think of both *Syndicate* and *Cannon Fodder*. Graphically it's a particularly attractive-looking svga isometric thing, and from what we've seen in the early

stages of development you can shoot at, and in turn blow up, just about everything that appears on the screen. Considering the amount of action, it looks like it's going to be incredibly fast, and combined with a rather snazzy zoom feature – where the playing area is smoothly expanded when you reach



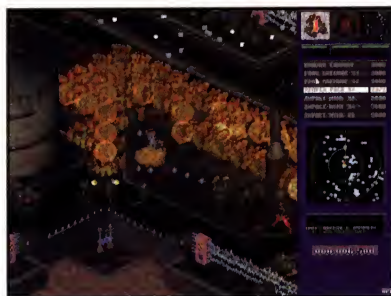
particularly aggressive punch-ups – it has to be said that it's all a damn sight more impressive-looking than the screenshots here could ever do justice to.

What's the story then?

As you'd expect, the storyline is suitably futuristic, dark and in some ways a little Manga/Anime-esque. The whole thing revolves around the fact that a force of human-built biomechanical creatures (not unlike Giger's *Aliens*) are gradually taking over the earth

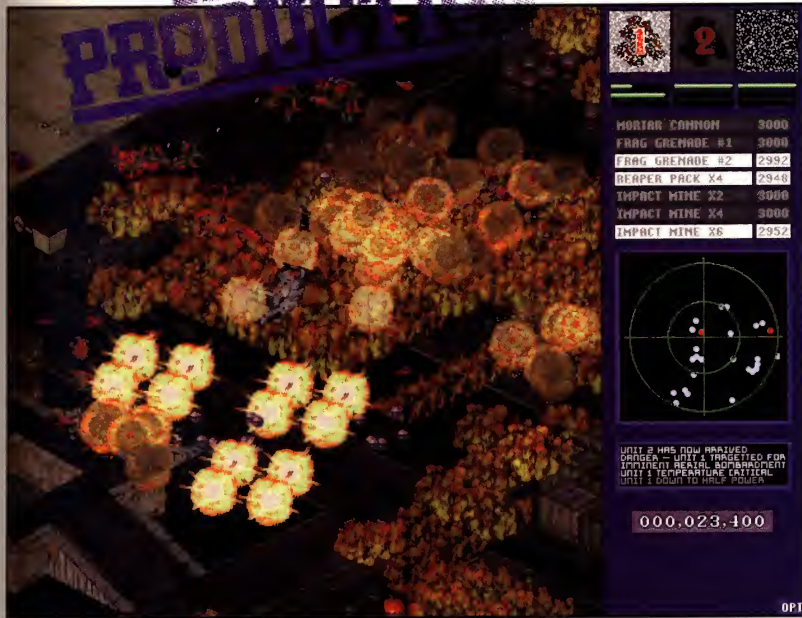
(Below, centre) "Oops," says Billy as he accidentally reintroduces the 'fart-lighting' gag into the pages of *PC Zone*.

(Below) All the graphics are SVGA and look particularly fantastic.



IN
PRODUCTION

(Below) Er... BANG!
Or something.



using money gained from collecting salvageable items in each war zone) and let rip. This probably all sounds very straightforward so far, but things are set to get really difficult when you find that you must control three combat droids who have all been dropped in different parts of the city, simultaneously, and in real-time. It's not turn-based, it doesn't have freeze-time... and it's all incredibly fast-paced; leave one droid alone for too long and you know damn well that he's going to get the crap blasted out of him. As one of the geezers at Mirage says, the gameplay is a bit like spinning plates - you have to keep hopping backwards and forwards looking after everything. It doesn't let up, and the only way to

give yourself a breather is to hit pause.

Hopefully - and the tea leaves look promising - we'll have a fully playable demo of the game with our next issue so you can check it out for yourself. **Z**

My god... it's enormous

The game is divided into five different playing areas which include an airport, an industrial zone, something that looks disturbingly like Docklands, an urban scenario and finally a particularly claustrophobic central business district. Each of these five zones will have five separate missions, and a different map has been developed from each mission - giving a total of er, um, er, hang on... 25 missions altogether.

Initially, all the maps were designed very roughly before being put through Mirage's rather cool map-editing tool, which gives you the isometric 3D thing good and proper.



Other cool stuff

When we went to Mirage to have a look at the game, the whole thing was still in pieces strewn across a variety of different machines. However, having spoken to the chap in charge of the project, he assured us that the finished game will be both a one-player blast-fest as well as a multi-player either co-op or Deathmatch game... hoorah! Round about, ooh right now I suppose, the programmers and graphic artists are working on some multi-player specific maps (which will be very different from the 25 in-game maps) and we should be able to show you these when we review the game in a couple of months.



...Soon
we can

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INTERACTIVE MAGIC PRESENTS

DESTINY

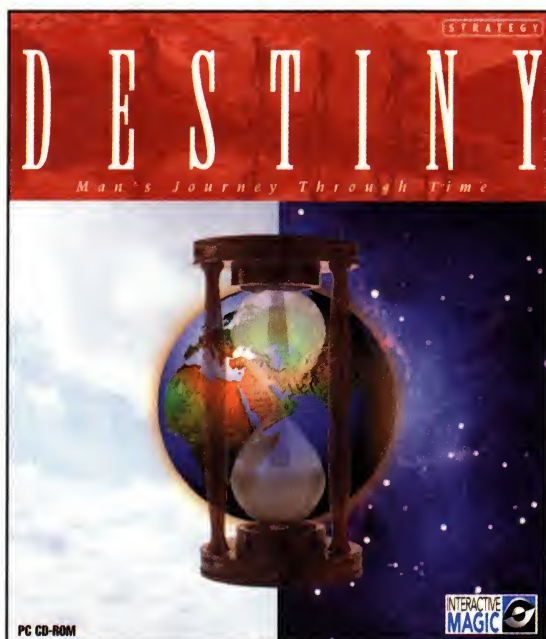
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In Civilization® and SimCity®, you had a taste of playing God. And it was good...Now you're ready to be God.

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But unlike any God game you've ever played, or even seen before, Destiny allows you to walk among your subjects in a 3-D world. Now you can strategize like a real general-- hide your troops behind a hill and take the enemy by surprise!

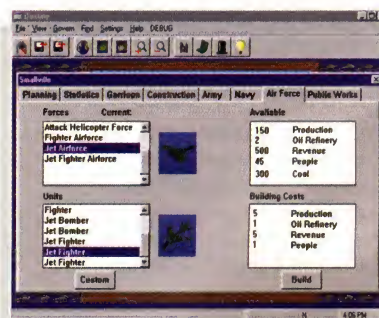
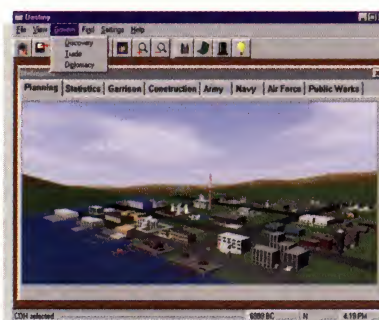
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WIN! WIN! WIN!

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EXCALIBUR SWORD

and tickets to the
Camelot fun park
courtesy of Psygnosis!

THE GOBSMACKINGLY GORGEOUS POINT-AND-CLICK adventure known as *Chronicles Of The Sword* from Psygnosis is out now. To help you get into character (ie weird elf-like dude), Psygnosis are giving away some rather fine swords and tickets to the Camelot theme park to five lucky PC Zone readers.

All you have to do to win is answer the three simple questions below and send your entry in to us at the address on the coupon.

1 WHAT SHAPE WAS KING ARTHUR'S TABLE?

- A) Round B) Square C) Dodexagonal

2 WHAT DID KING ALFRED ALLEGEDLY BURN?

- A) Cakes B) Rubber C) His fingers

3 WHERE WAS KING HAROLD STRUCK BY THAT FATAL ARROW?

- A) His eye B) His arse C) His right testicle

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

PC ZONE

Chronicles Compo
19 Bolsover Street
London W1P 7HJ

All entries must reach us by the time Halley's Comet comes round again (or by the end of May, whichever is the sooner). All usual restrictions apply. No employees of Dennis or Psygnosis are eligible to enter. No elves either. Or people with pointy ears (except maybe Mr Spock).



WIN!



Daley Thompson's World Class Decathlon

As Olympic fever prepares to infect the world like some huge lumbering multi-sports beast, **Paul Presley** – eighth and last in his school's 200-metre sports day race – inspects the driver of what is certain to be a long-running bandwagon.



(Left) The rest of the world has a good laugh as the Welsh struggle to read their limbo instructions upside-down.

(Right) One way to get rid of your opponents – a spear straight through their vital organs. Yus!



time. Now that doesn't mean we're going to see the world's first hex-based sports sim. No sir. You don't only have to worry about performing well in each of the ten events, but you also have to concentrate on keeping your customisable character fit and healthy throughout the whole tournament (healthy? Wassat mean?). Should you take a third attempt at the discus or save some of your dwindling energy reserves for the

MAGGIE PHILBIN (PHWOAR!), FIZZ-BOMBS, deliberately infesting your feet with verrucas to bunk off swimming at school, playing football in the park with jumpers for goalposts, eight young lads crowding round a Commodore 64 to play *Summer Games* from US Gold – all enduring images from my childhood days. And mark my words, we'll not see their like again, apart from perhaps one of them. The last one. You see, in a fit of timing that would make Bob Monkhouse blush, Interactive Magic are in training to release a multi-player Decathlon game into the world ready for the forthcoming Olympics, and have associated themselves with one of this country's best-loved sporting heroes. That's right, *Matthew Le Tissier's World Class Decathlon*

is about to hit your screens. Hmmm, what? Oh, sorry. Er, *Daley Thompson's World Class Decathlon* is about to hit your screens. Heh, my apologies there, folks.

Brains over brawn

Anyone that grew up with an 8-bit computer in the bedroom will no doubt remember the Daley Thompson games of old – stick-wagging, keyboard-pounding, tension-packed affairs that proved a boon for both the finger-plaster and joystick manufacturing industries alike. The development company responsible for the game, Holy Mackerel! Media, are hoping to try and rekindle that self-same spirit of intense participation, while introducing the often-neglected strategy element of the gruelling athletic events at the same



(Far left) The Holy Mackerel! team and the boys from DMA Inc. Inter-corporation rivalry? Naah...

(Left) Bob Fiorini, Decathlon project manager, hard at work. These and other rare photographs are available as a limited set and can be ordered from the following number...

The life of our Daley

- 1958 Born. Much rejoicing.
- 1980 Broke World Decathlon Record. Won Olympic Gold. More rejoicing.
- 1984 Won second Olympic Gold. Set new World Record. Bundles of rejoicing.
- 1989 Broke long-term relationship with partner Terry McCann, only to form a new one with his nephew, Ray. (*Nah mate, that was Arthur Daley* – Ed.)
- 1992 Co-presented *The Weekend Show* on BBC1. Rejoicing slightly dimmed.
- 1993 Failed to make a comeback with the re-release of *We Are Detectives*. (*That was the Thompson Twins* – Ed.)
- 1994 Starred in *Howard's End* with Anthony Hopkins. (*Sigh. Emma Thompson. Anyone got any Anadin?* – Ed.)
- 1995 Went from Sunday-only to seven-day publication. (*Oh Christ. That was the Daily Sport and you're not even close or historically accurate anymore* – Ed.)
- 1996 Uh, devised *The Greatest* for Channel Four. Starred in computer Decathlon game. (*No, really?* – Ed.)
- 1996^{1/2} Erm, that's it.



upcoming 110-metre hurdles? Was that last effort of yours at the pole vault enough to win the heat or should you gamble on another jump and risk losing in the shot put?

Each game starts with you assigning points to your athlete's different skills. Do you want a strong thrower or would you like more overall fitness? This way, you can tailor each athlete to match your own strengths and weaknesses. And then there's the career aspect to consider. When you complete a full Decathlon, your athlete is awarded bonus points to be added to his current values, so you can constantly improve your scores, times and distances until you eventually become good enough to take on any of the 25 historic opponents that are waiting for you. These include such Olympiad luminaries as Bruce Genna, Dan O'Brien and the eponymous Daley himself. Each of these opponents have had their real-life ratings accurately mapped into the game, ensuring that each provides a unique and different challenge. Which basically means that Daley will thrash you in absolutely everything except the discus, in which he's crap (allegedly).

Aiming for accuracy

Apart from on the field, Daley also appears throughout the game in short FMV bursts, offering advice on each event and laughing when your shot put lands on your foot. These sequences were all filmed using the traditional blue-screen technology in Leicester, the home of Q Broadcasting who were responsible for BBC's *Heart Of The Country*, Bandai's *Mighty Morphin' Power Ranger* adverts and Gloria Hunniford's *Options*. Quite a pedigree (Ahem – Ed.). He was also on hand throughout the game's design process (as was Bruce Genna, America's own Decathlon star) to ensure that the programmers were able to make all of the internal workings of the events as accurate as possible.

As well as internal accuracy, Holy Mackerel! have joined forces with Dallas Multimedia Inc to produce some stunningly accurate graphics (not so surprising a merger when you consider both companies are based in the same office). While relatively unknown in this country, DMA Inc have enjoyed considerable (and award-winning) US success providing animations and computer imagery for all manner of advertising companies, PR firms and TV comedy shows. This means we are treated to fully-rendered human figures that run, jump, vault and, er, javel as accurately as the real things.

The real joy of the game though is that it supports multiple human players, currently planned for three or four on the one machine with tentative plans for a networking upgrade release later on. Back come the days of huddling round the monitor with your mates, nudging each other off the keyboard at a crucial moment in each race, covering each other's eyes a nanosecond before they lob the javelin and 'accidentally' knocking the power lead out of the back just as your athlete slides into last place with no hope of recovery. Ahh, bliss. **Z**



(Left) Disco dancing makes a welcome return to the world of Decathlon...

(Above) ...as does Olympic Prancing.

Product details

Developer: Holy Mackerel! Media

Publisher: Interactive Magic

Telephone: 01276 62462

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: June/July

More info on Web page: <http://www.imagicgames.com>



Gun running

The world of the Decathlon was rocked to its foundations recently as two of its leading figures clashed over the burning question of the moment – should an athlete try to anticipate the starting pistol in a race, or should he wait until he hears it? During the filming of the US version of the game (in which American Decathlon star Bruce Genna replaces our Daley), Genna offers the following advice to players: "Try to anticipate the starting pistol to gain an advantage off the blocks." Thompson, however, feels differently. "I never try to anticipate the gun," he muses between filming, "you might make a false start." And so the debate rages on... (You're mad – Ed.)



Like Pete Sampras, **Charlie Brooker** is renowned for a blinding tennis service. He aims straight for his opponent's eyes.

Pete Sampras Extreme Tennis

Product details

Developer: Codemasters

Publisher: Codemasters

Telephone: 01926 814132

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: June



(Above) Four *Planet Of The Apes* extras get together for a clay court knockabout.

SPORT. YOU'RE EITHER GOOD AT IT OR you're not. I'm not. In fact I suffer from an active aversion to all things sport-related. It starts at an early age: usually the crap 'sportee' is made to suffer the indignity of being 'last pick for the football team' week after week at school (actually I wasn't quite the last pick - Tommy 'Stumpy' Johnson, the school amputee, usually pipped me to that particular post). As school life progresses and the 'sportively challenged' pupil is forced to try their hand at more and more different games - and fail miserably at all of them - a sense of loathing creeps in. Upon reaching adulthood, televised sporting events are switched off or derided, and a deep-seated suspicion of people who frequent leisure centres and playing fields takes grip. Sport is pointless, boring, neanderthal garbage, and should be avoided by all rational adults like a vicious strain of plague that makes your face swell up and spurt hot sour pus onto the dinner table.

Well, that's what I used to think until - geek confession time - I got into 'sporty' video games. Suddenly I understood why people found sport so

exciting. Previously I'd never considered the fact that sporting success also requires the use of the brain muscle. Sports games are basically, much like the very best beat 'em ups, lightning fast strategy games. Played against a human opponent, they're pretty bloody unbeatable. PC owners already have access to some classic sporting titles - check out Patrick's round-up in issue 37 recommendations - but until now, the range of tennis games has been more than a little bit sparse.

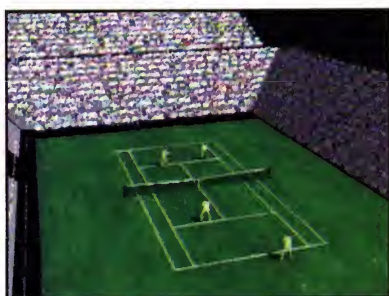
Which is why this is good news: Codemasters are currently up to their elbows in the production of *Pete Sampras Extreme Tennis* - a souped-up, polygon-spattered update of their phenomenally successful 16-bit console hit.

Tennis the menace

If you're familiar with previous Codemasters titles, you may be forgiven for being a little thrown by the 3D splendour of these screenshots. They've been responsible for some utterly classic games, such as *Micro Machines*, in which the graphics, while crisp and bright in design, look primitive alongside the *Donkey Kong Countries* and *Flight Unlimiteds* of this world. The reason for this is admirable, they've always contested (correctly) that the quality of the gameplay is the most important factor in any game.

It's an adage that the programmers of *Sampras Extreme* still adhere to but it so happens that this time around, the visuals are gorgeous. What you can't see here is the incredibly realistic animation - our old friend 'motion capture' has been at work - that accompanies each and every player movement. Besides the swings, dashes and dives, these players have motion-captured nervous twitches, shoelace-tying sequences, full-on racquet-hurling tantrums - you name it. All in glorious 3D run-a-round-o-vision. It's like *Tekken* with trainers on.

Other bells and whistles include a selection of different camera viewpoints (a feature which is more or less de rigueur in any game you care to mention these days - before long we'll see shareware *Tetris* rip-offs with multiple views), plenty of between-match FMV (in the style of a TV sports show), a range of exotic locations (including a secret level), and last but not least - over 90MB of CD space



(Left) Bask in the glory of 3D rotaty camera angles... and then miss your shot.

(Right) Can you spot Plastic Woman - aka the Duchess of Kent - in the crowd?



devoted to a bewildering array of sound effects, from the gasps of the crowd to the sound a tennis ball makes when it hits a player in the face. In fact, it looks and feels so realistic that there'll no doubt be a virtual ticket tout wandering outside the court, and a virtual 'food tent' in which you can hand over your \$250,000 winnings in exchange for one bowl of strawberries and cream.

Hot spurting love deuce

But, of course, all this prettiness and shininess counts for no more than a hill of beans if the gameplay isn't up to scratch. Simple, yet maddeningly addictive gameplay has always been Codemasters' forte, and the *Sampras* team are determined to maintain the trend. They've been doing their homework here - studying as many tennis games as they can find, and trying to pick out exactly which elements make or break each one as a piece of entertainment. There have been countless renditions of the sport throughout videogaming history (and if you count *Pong* as a tennis game since the very beginning), yet surprisingly few of them have been bona fide classics (*Super Tennis*, or *Smash Tennis* - both on the SNES - are probably the finest currently available).

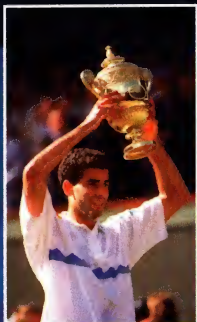
The *Sampras Extreme* team are currently fine-tuning the gameplay to perfection, so it's obviously far too early for me to say whether they've got things right or not, but there are



Sampras – the man and his music

If you're anything like me, then you probably couldn't give a fiddler's pluck which sporting celebrity has chosen to lend his or her name to a game, you just want to know if it's any good or not. But just in case you do actually want to know a bit about Mr Sampras, here are a few tasty factoids I prepared earlier. Oh, and by the way, some of the following points aren't exactly true. See if you can guess which ones:

- Pete Sampras is known as 'Pistol Pete' due to his 128mph service.
- He is the current International Tennis Foundation champion.
- During his early years, while studying at the Royal Academy of Grass Sports, Sampras supported himself with part-time work as the voice of 'Mooncat' in the children's television series *Get Up And Go*.
- Pete Sampras isn't just a whiz on the tennis courts. He's also a world-class water-skier. He once skied across the entire Pacific Ocean – without the aid of a boat or skis!
- His favourite colour is lemon blue. He can fly and shoot lightning from the tips of his fingers. And he's never ever come last when playing 'The Biscuit Game'.



some promising indicators... Take, for instance, the collision detection, which is somewhat 'generous'.

All too often the biggest obstacle to overcome in any digitised racquet-slinging sim is the precision required to return the piddliest of volleys. When a game's being that finnickity, each match soon degenerates into a back-and-forth slug-fest, terminated only when someone misses the ball (all too easy to do), often accompanied by heated cries of "but it went right through my racquet!", followed by prolonged sulking. Not so in games like *Super Tennis* where your player had to be within a fair distance from the ball in order to hit it, allowing you to concentrate on beating your opponent through cunning use of shots and tactics, rather than dull, workman-like accuracy. A similar system has been employed in *Sampras Extreme* – it may make the game less faithfully 'realistic' and more like an arcade game – but hey – it'll be about 3000 times more fun. And fun, ultimately, is what we're after.

In other words, this is one to keep an eye on. *Pete Sampras Extreme Tennis* is scheduled for release at the end of June, and we'll bring you a full review at the earliest possible nanosecond. **Z**



(Left) Never mind the tennis, just look at those fluffy, puffy, wuffy clouds. (Nonce – Ed.)

THE JURY
WENT OUT...

THE VERDICT

CAME IN...

RAYMAN

86%

PC-GAMER & PC-HOME

85%

PC-POWER

THE DEFINITIVE

PLATFORM GAME

PC-CD ROM



Ubi Soft, Bridge House, 11 Creek Road, Hampton Court, Surrey KT8 9BE
Tel: 0181 941 4004 Web site: <http://www.ubisoft.com>

REVIEW ZONE

Is *Euro 96* just *Actua Soccer* dressed up a bit, or is really something completely different now?



THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM



90+ CLASSIC

The highest accolade a game can attain. A wonderful example of gaming excellence that deserves to be recognised and indeed cherished, or something.



80-89 RECOMMENDED

An excellent game that simply lacks that certain something that makes it one of the true greats. Well worth checking out though.



20 and below PANTS

Absolutely bloody awful. Crap with a capital C. Naff with a capital N. You get the picture.



486 FRIENDLY

The DX2 is still one of the most popular spec machines, but how do you know what games will run on the thing? This icon shows you which games you can still enjoy even if you don't have a ninja Pentium.

Looking back

Wing Commander IV

What exactly has the world got against the *Wing Commander* series? Everyone and their dog loved it when the first couple of games were released, and then slagged the shit out of it when *X-Wing* came along. *Wing Commander IV* is upon us, and people are queuing up to give it a kicking. What exactly is the problem? Well, for some people it appears to be the game, for others it appears to be the 'interactive movie' bits, and then you've got all these people who are completely pissed off that Origin spent so much money making it. Our Jeremy had a pop at it in our Looking Back section last month, and as he correctly pointed out, EA may have set themselves up for a slagging by hyping it up too much before it was released. He also pointed out that maybe software houses spend too much time on presentation and not enough on gameplay. Be that

as it may, *Wing IV* is still an extremely playable and highly polished product, and there aren't many games around at the moment you can say that about. Take this advice from someone who has spent four solid days in the company of *Wing IV*: it's the best looking, most exciting space combat sim you can currently buy for your PC. Right Jerms, outside for a fight.

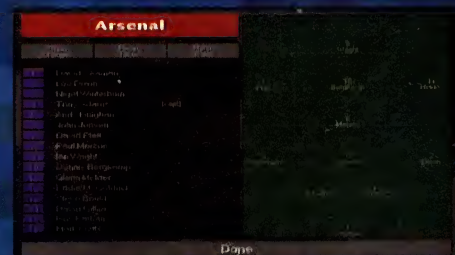
Chris Anderson

Championship Manager 2

After months of waiting, playtesting betas into the early hours, one zillion data revisions and more 48-hour de-bugging sessions than anyone at Domark can care to remember, *Championship Manager 2*, the football fans' dream game was released to joyous applause and rapture. They'd done it, they'd surpassed themselves and made me (and thousands of other addicts) very happy indeed. It was indeed fantastic. Goodbye life.

Hello Neil Lennon (Crewe), Peter Smith (Brighton) and James Cardona (America de Cali).

But, it still wasn't perfect. In fact, there were one or two annoying bugs that while they didn't make the game unplayable, were very,



VERY annoying. Calls to Domark ensued, the CM2 CIX conference exploded and Domark went very quiet. "Errh... There's a patch on the way that will sort it all out," they promised. That was last year. And now, some seven (or is it eight?) months later it's here (well, almost). And guess what? They've fixed just about everything. How's that for commitment to customer satisfaction?

Which brings me neatly on to the subject of bugs and software companies. Sure, however hard you test a game, something is bound to slip through every now and then, but (and it's a big BUT) as long as the developers hurry to release a patch to sort it all out it shouldn't be too much of a problem. Obviously, this attitude can't be taken to the extreme and software publishers shouldn't release unfinished games for the public to playtest (which, to an extent, is something that





PROCESSOR HUNGRY

Some games run slowly, even on high-spec machines with ninjascope graphics cards. Just run something like *Magic Carpet* in hi-res on virtually any PC and you end with something running in Jerk-o-vision.



WINDOWS 95

Speaks for itself really – if it's got this icon slapped on it, it's been designed to take advantage of all that Windows 95 offers.

90+	CLASSIC
80-89	RECOMMENDED
70-79	GOOD
50-69	AVERAGE
40-49	BELOW AVERAGE
20-39	POOR
20 and below	PANTS



PC Zone use Gateway 2000 PCs exclusively 'cause they're absolutely fab. If you want any more info about Gateway 2000 machines, you can call them on:

0800 742000



GATEWAY2000

"You've got a friend in the business."

Thanks to

- Steve McKevitt
- Glen O'Connell
- Jason Dutton
- Jon Cole

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A round-up of the month's other full price and budget releases including

Congo, Cyril Cyberpunk and Super Stardust.



Domark and indeed every software house are guilty of. As far as bugs are concerned the buck should stop with the playtesters and at the very latest with the journalist reviewing it. But in Domark's favour, at least they had the decency (and loyalty) to the punters who bought the game to eventually put it right, and full credit to them. Other software companies, please take note. It's worth it in the end.

Jeremy Wells

Command & Conquer: The Covert Operations

Everyone bought it yet? Yes? You haven't spent much time on it yet, have you? Presumably there's a good chance now then that either a) your monitor has a large hole in it or b) you've tossed the whole bloody thing out of the window. It's so damn hard – excellent, but unreasonably hard. Of all the missions on offer there's only one that the averagely competent *C&C* player could actually manage to complete – the rest are for superhumans only. Why? It's a more than worthwhile purchase, and I'm all for a bit of a challenge, but does it have to be so ridiculous?

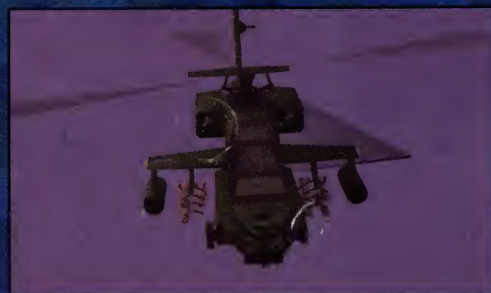
Over the years there have been numerous examples of this kind of thing when it comes to add-on disks. Anyone remember *Syndicate: American Revolt*? Remember the first mission where all of your agents

got toasted within the first 20 seconds unless you had some really serious hardware? Well, this seems to come from the same school of thought. Quite whether this is necessarily the right school I don't know – personally I'm finding that I play the thing less and less now as some of the missions are just so overwhelming.

Despite this though, what it does offer is a bunch of features that we really would have liked to have seen included in the first game. It seems that Westwood listened to what we all wanted and came up with the goods. You have to check out the missions with the commandos, they're absolutely fantastic.

Let's hope that *Red Alert* isn't as hard as this though, eh?

John Davison



Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

Azrael's Tear
Descent 2
Championship Manager 2
Quake
C&C: The Covert Operations

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

Shakil The Wolf
Cyberbykes
Ironblood
Expect No Mercy
Cyril Cyberpunk

Euro 96

Gremlin's *Actua Soccer* upgrade gets the official Euro 96 licence. Patrick McCarthy gets paid to play computer games. The world is a cruel and arbitrary place.

WE HAVE A LOVE-HATE relationship with *Actua Soccer*. It drives us right round the bend. It could be extremely good, but there are so many things wrong with the game that there is a compulsory counselling session held every morning in the PC Zone office in which we sit around holding hands and drinking herb tea. Once we've all had a go at standing up and introducing ourselves, we then talk through the distressing things that happened the last time we played it. Despite this, we play it nearly every day.

The story so far

The first PC version was very attractive, boasting fancy, swirly camerawork and motion-captured players, and so on. But beneath this attractiveness lay a dark soul. Much debate arose in the PC Zone office when it came down to scoring the review: opinions differed, because while it was clearly the best PC football game available (which wasn't actually a massive endorsement), it still had problems. In the end it was awarded 92, but we did try and highlight what was wrong with it. (The alternative was to give it say, 80: it depends on whether you score things according to genre, or with some kind of absolute across all genres in mind. Unfortunately we went for the former approach.)

Then came the slightly improved PSX version: you could now select the player nearest the ball yourself, rather than have the computer switch control just as you were trying to make a tackle. There was a new 'speed burst' button so that you could overtake and

tackle the ball-carrier by pushing him out of the way instead of chopping his legs off at the knee. But while the goalkeepers had also benefited from some tweaks, they still showed a worrying lack of concern for keeping a clean sheet, and often contributed to their own downfall (suspicions still abound about the involvement of a Far Eastern betting syndicate) and many of the basic gameplay elements remained flawed. This latest PC version is now the third version of the game.

Now read on...

In essence, *Euro 96* is the same game as *Actua Soccer*. The goalkeepers are now more likely to save a low shot (whereas previously they were so busy being beautifully animated that the ball hit the net before they finished their stylish dive), but they still let soft goals in (see *Artificial Stupidity*). True, the game runs a lot better, but you'll need a fast Pentium for a satisfactory result in hi-res mode. The speed burst button has been carried over





(Right) The Euro 96 logo. The Spanish use Mariscal or Miro for their sporting logos; we use an educationally subnormal five year old with a paint package.

from the PSX version, along with a new feature (lifted from *Striker*) for dead-ball kicks which offers more control over the ball. In terms of sound, you now get a greater helping of sampled commentary, but it seems that the sound effects have been taking some weird pills – for example, don't be surprised by a slide tackle sounding like a minor firework display. Generally though, too many faults have been ignored. (See *Things that make you go "Aaargh!!!"*.)



Style over content?

Unfortunately more attention has been paid to superficial graphical elements than to basic gameplay. For example, it's crying out for a way to control the goalkeeper's distribution after he's made a save. But instead of

introducing helpful features, the producers presumably reckon it's more important to add extra bits of animation: player stretching routines, and more referee animations. But who the hell cares what the ref's doing? Gorgeous referees don't make you feel any better when your goalkeeper rolls the

(Above) Billy's new boots glinted beautifully in the sunlight; his hair was looking good. All that spoilt it was the ball, which his Dad had pumped up far too much.

ball out straight to the opposing forward when you're hanging on to a 1-0 lead with seconds to go. You only have to look at the new "injured" feature (see *A horse, a horse...*) to realise that game features are fitted to available motion-capturing rather than the



Jeremy's opinion

Having played *Actua Soccer* almost every day in the office since we first got our hands on a playable beta at the end of last year, it's probably fair to say that it's *the* most played game in the *Zone* HQ.

That said, it's also probably one of the most frustrating games we've ever experienced. The first PC version had more than its fair share of problems: keepers that were dodgier than Bruce Grobbelaar; a terrible player select system; players who fell over more times than Ginola and Klinsmann put together, and offside decisions that would rival those given at Old Trafford. Gremlin promised that the PSX version would be better, and that all the problems would be sorted, but it still suffered from the same fundamental flaws.

Now, nine months on and three releases later, *Euro 96* is an improvement, but it's still not right. Sadly, it would seem that they just can't find a way to solve all the problems. It looks gorgeous, and when you play it you can't help thinking that it's got the potential to be utterly fantastic, but ultimately this is underlined by a feeling of being let down. If you already own *Actua Soccer* and buy *Euro 96* because you want a better version of the game, that's 90 quid for what is still in many ways an 'unfinished' product. That makes about as much sense as trying to resign Marco Boogers.

Jeremy Wells



The research, oh! the research

Much has been made of the way the teams have been thoroughly researched and players scrupulously graded in ability. Unfortunately, this extensive research must have been commissioned to someone from another dimension, because players are out of position and teams' default formations bear little resemblance to the way they play in real life. Look at the Dutch side – there's been a lot of talk about how they now play in Ajax's 3-4-3 formation, but that's certainly not what they're playing here – not to mention the fact that 3-4-3 doesn't even exist! Those available are mostly garbage (4-0-6, anyone?), the formations depicted graphically often bear little resemblance to their numerical notation, and a lot of the players don't even appear on the pitch in the position chosen in the formation screen: full backs appear at centre-half, centre-backs in midfield, and so on – a complete mess.

One quick glance at the French side reveals the extent of the 'research': both Cantona and Ginola are in the starting line-up, yet at the time of writing the French coach is still saying he has no intention of picking them. Papin, who hasn't played for France for some time and isn't even expected to feature in the squad, is the default centre-forward; Youri Djorkaeff and Christophe Dugarry are substitutes, both rated below him in ability. Christian Karembeu appears as a central defender and Nicolas Quédec is conspicuous by his absence. Hmm... nice research. Some players aren't even the right skin colour. I mean, if you're going to bother making some players black, why not make it the right ones?



A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse...

There's a new bit of animation for when players are tired or injured. Being young professional sportsmen at peak fitness, this naturally occurs after two slide tackles or 20 minutes of play – whichever comes first. After that, they hobble around like a synchronised dance team doing a mass Richard III impression. They can hardly walk, never mind run. It's stupid – an example of a game being dictated to by the graphics. It hasn't even been thought through properly; the only way to find out who's injured is to give them the ball so that you can hear their name – you certainly won't see it in the substitution screen. (And you still have the absurd situation from the first game where you can't make a substitution when the ball's out of play; you have to wait for play to start, select it during play, then make the substitution when play stops again.) Even worse, when I did substitute someone in the first game of a tournament, an injured replacement came shuffling on.



Artificial stupidity

To show you how "smart" the goalies are, here's a sequence of frame grabs showing a typical keeper's reaction to a long, lobbed pass. It's not a shot, because the shoot button hasn't been pressed, therefore he doesn't need to worry about tricky things like making a save. Right? Right.

1



2



4



6



8



10



12



3



5



7



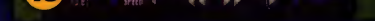
9



11



13



I still can't stand up for falling down

Everyone still falls down as soon as they touch each other. My goalie gave away a penalty because he was standing holding the ball and an opposing forward fell over his foot. The last time I saw this many people hitting the deck for no apparent reason was when I watched a documentary on the Great Dropsy Epidemic of 1936.

(Below) Top tip: Paedophiles! Attract children by dressing up in a poncey mascot suit.



other way around. I suppose we shouldn't really be that surprised - take a butcher's at the average contemporary adventure with its hours of FMV footage and little or no actual game, and you can only assume that most computer games developers concentrate on using whatever fancy tricks the latest technology provides first, while putting gameplay a distant second.

VFM?

This is the officially licensed game of the European Championships, but as far as teams for your money goes, the only newcomers are Croatia and Turkey (both of which were inexplicably left out of the original), and there are only 16 teams in total. In terms of ways to play, you can choose the proper Euro Championships, with games taking place in the proper grounds on the proper dates. Should you get bored with that, you can redraw the groups and play it with different ones;



Wireplay

Euro 96 is the first game to be used for British Telecom's new Wireplay service. This means you can dial people up anywhere in the country and play football against them, secure in the knowledge that if you thrash the arse off them they won't be able to resort to physical violence.

(Below) That's the trouble with having the Pope in your side at away games.



alternatively there's also the Wireplay option for playing over a phone line.

As far as the PC Zone score goes, there are two factors – the game plays slightly better than it did previously, and while some problems have been fixed, there are still many others that haven't. The shame of it is that it could be stunning. If you gave these graphics to the people who made *ISS Deluxe* on the SNES, for example, they'd probably blow your mind. But whenever you sit down to play this, there's always something to irritate the hell out of you. You keep

(Below) Pouting Kevin, 23, is from Chelmsford. His hobbies include doing his hair, reading his horoscope and turtle-teasing.

going back to it because it has moments where you think it's absolutely brilliant – but then it drives you berserk again and you have to buy another joystick.

Gameplay judgements aside though, there's also the additional cost factor to consider. If you already have a copy of the original and decide to go out and splurge on this, you'll have spent 90 quid – which is a lot of money for a game which is still in development. And you'll be getting a game that offers you fewer teams and features which should have been included in the first version



Things that make you go "Aaargh!!!!!!!!!!"

These are some of the more common problems we've experienced with *Euro 96* and *Actua Soccer*...

★ It's late in the game. You're playing the computer. You're one-nil up. Your goalkeeper gets the ball. You have no control over what he does. You hope he will boot it downfield. He rolls it out directly to an opposition forward, who hammers it into the net. N-o-o-o-o!!!

★ You run through on goal. You shake off two tackles and shoot. Your forward runs across in front of the shot and neatly blocks it... again. You spend more time trying to throw them off than the bloody defenders.

★ Normal (as opposed to slide) tackles are shite: they're so slow that the other players have finished the game and gone home before you've even lifted your motion-captured leg.

★ You try to pass to a nearby team-mate, but your player thinks it would be more stylish to elaborately backheel the ball in another direction entirely – like into the path of an onrushing opponent (who scores).

★ And there's more: computer teams who still run to the by-line and score from ridiculous angles (except they take a half-pace back inside to make it seem all right); players who still develop a sudden overwhelming interest in cloud-gazing when you pass to them, leading to gentle passes bouncing away off their head, calf or arse; goalkeepers who run out to the halfway line, chasing whoever has the ball like something out of a Benny Hill sketch... and so on.



Chris' opinion

I feel cheated! Having played *Actua Soccer* to death, we sat down and compiled a list of its problems to present to Gremlin. We were wasting our time. The new version looks better, has more animations and more commentary, but the fundamental problems we originally discovered are still there.

We're all very disappointed. Nobody wanted Gremlin to get things right more than us (since in spite of everything it's still our fave footie game) – but they've cocked up again. Considering that this is their third attempt at getting things right, you can only assume that the programmers simply haven't got a clue about producing a football game.

This brings us to another problem: we have to tell you whether or not you should be buying this product. Well, if we said, "No, don't touch it," we would be being hypocritical. Jeremy and I play this game *every* single day and there's no arguing that, glitches aside, the new version is undeniably better. *Actua Soccer* is still the best football game on the PC and I know we'll still be playing it to death, but I'd just like to say to Gremlin that if they don't get it right next time we shall be paying a visit to Sheffield with some long sharp implements which we will insert in intimate parts of their anatomy.

Chris Anderson

anyway. If *Euro 96* had been a data disk I'd have overlooked some of the continuing problems and awarded a higher score, because at least they are trying to improve things. But at the end of the day *Euro 96* isn't a data disk – it's a full-priced game. Maybe they'll manage to get the fourth version right. Until then we live in hope. Z

Score

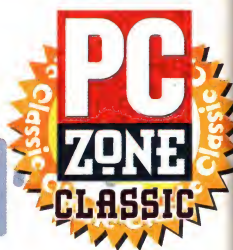
70

Somewhat improved gameplay, but it doesn't warrant another 45 quid.

Price: £44.99 Release Date: May
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
Tel: 01142 753423

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Azrael's Tear



Paul Presley once found the Holy Grail. No really. Oh all right then, not really. It isn't easy to keep coming up with relevant introductions month in and month out you know.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE game designing world, let me introduce you to an adult game. A real adult game. A game for mature audiences. It doesn't have half-naked bimbettes flashing their gazonkas (as I believe the current parlance has it) at us. It doesn't feature FMV sequences with people effing and blinding with every other word. It doesn't cough up more in the way of blood and guts than Hannibal Lector's salad bar. It's just intelligent, has a complex yet intriguing plot, and has hard – genuinely hard – puzzles. In the same way that you wouldn't take your kiddiwinks to see *Leaving Las Vegas* for the simple reason that the story is too mature for them, so the same is true here. *Azrael's Tear* is a *System Shock*-style adventure that treats its audience with such unassuming intelligence that it's both a delight to play and a breath of fresh air after all these so-called 'mature' games that take themselves so seriously and are about as mature as Shane Richie.

Their footwork impeccable...

The Holy Grail. The Cup of Christ. Source of immortality. Oh, and that wooden thingummy wotsit in the last



(Above) Peter Gabriel's newest video reveals the darker side of the much-loved pop funster's nature.

(Below) Tobias employs some rather less than subtle interrogation techniques.

(Below right) The original plans for Hampton Court's maze suffered from a few fatal design flaws.

Indiana Jones film. For centuries man has searched for this most prized of relics and now man, one man in particular, has found it. The only trouble is he's run into trouble and so you've taken it upon your talented self to follow his lead and recover it. Why you? Because you, for your sins, are a thief.

A high-tech thief in fact. A thief of the future. A Raptor (yes, sad but true. Blame *Jurassic Park*, I always do), armed with technology and the kind of skills that would make David Niven look like Peter Sellers. The year is 2003 and you've been given directions to the ancient home of the Knights Templar, guardians of the Grail, a long-hidden underground mining complex called Aeternis. Your mission is to enter the lair and recover the prize, finding out what happened to your predecessor

along the way. Work your way through a few rooms, solve a few puzzles and discover a few clues, although it soon becomes clear that there is a lot more going on than meets the eye.

I won't elaborate too much about the plot as discovering the characters and unearthing their schemes is what makes the game so absorbing. Suffice to say, you won't be disappointed. Many games throw characters upon characters at you while hinging them around all sorts of basic plots and loosely tied-in puzzles. The end result is usually a disjointed mixture that fails to cohere. *Azrael's Tear* melds everything together in a well told tale that, in terms of solid internal structure, rivals games such as the *Alone In The Dark* series.

Actually, as a quick aside, isn't it interesting to note that the only two



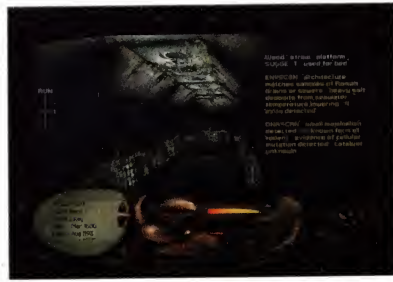


releases of late to feature the Knights Templar in earnest have both been excellent adventure games? (Well, I really enjoyed *Time Gate*.) Hmm.. perhaps there's a message here...

Okay, so the plot's good...

The game itself works in a similar way to *System Shock*, which comes as a welcome surprise as not nearly enough games have been utilising this most wonderful of game engines. Sure we can have *Dooms* and *Quakes* and *Hexens* erupting from every pore on our pus-ridden armpits (*How charming* - Ed.) but this is a slower, more thoughtful twist on the full motion first-person viewpoint. Unlike a lot of recent games you have total freedom of movement in each location. This means you can stand in any part of each room, you can look up and down at any part of it, and people, objects and things actually exist in it, rather than just being hot-spots that activate pre-rendered animations.

But this doesn't mean there's a lack of visual quality. Certainly you'll need a spec-hungry machine to get the most out of the free-moving SVGA graphics, but a nice feature - a really nice feature - is the ability to turn down the level of detail while moving, allowing the computer to turn everything back up Internet Web-page style when you stop again. Add to that some wonderful three-dimensional surround sound effects and you have a game that oozes atmosphere like a flu-ridden nostril oozes mucus into a handkerchief (*You're*



just full of these graphic metaphors today, aren't you? - Ed.). I mean that in a complementary way of course.

Every silver lining has a cloud

In many ways, *Azrael's Tear* is *System Shock 2* (or *Ultima Underworld 3*... or a cross between the two. A sort of *System Underworld 4*), and it's perhaps for this reason that I hesitate in heralding it as a milestone in gaming history. Other than its graphical talents, it doesn't really do that much to improve the engine. Indeed, it's actually taken some elements out - the crouching, lying down, looking around corners features are the most notable omissions - but the strange thing is that you don't really miss them now they're gone. Rather like the distant cousin from a family reunion who insisted on calling you Bob and showing you his tattoo. Sure, the game works perfectly well without them, but it still would've been nice to see it add something new.

The only other thing that grates is that you have to sit through a slight pause every time you go from one room to another. In spite of the proffered wallpapering excuse that you are only waiting for your helmet sensors to scan the area ahead, it's still very obvious that what you are really doing is waiting for the hard drive to poke the relevant monitor pixies to get them drawing. This pause is even more annoying in that your screen jerks your viewpoint around when it finishes

(Far left) The aftermath of the Cezanne riots at the Tate. Only the upper tier was left unscathed.

(Left) The obligatory crawling-around-in-the-drainage bit, so beloved of *Mission Impossible* fans.

(Right) The Chapel, a sanctuary of spiritual peace and harmony. A place to commune with God and receive his joyous blessing in all its material forms. So why the hell are they always so bloody spooky?



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2/66

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

loading, thwarting any hoped-for smooth transition. It's slight, but it's there nonetheless.

Industry take note

You can live with it though, and as a result the game's other individual components shine so brightly that nearby planets would be forgiven for thinking they've drifted into the wrong orbit by mistake. *Azrael's Tear* is a yardstick title, a game against which other adventures should be measured. I mentioned atmosphere earlier in relation to the game's sound and graphic quality, but it's worth raising it again here. If game manufacturers should learn anything at all from a title such as this, it's that atmosphere is more than just the aesthetics. It's a synthesis of looks, sounds, dramatic content, interactive challenge, characterisation and solid internal structure, mixed together by a team that gives all of these elements equal consideration. And it's this kind of recipe that makes for a good game. Here endeth the lesson. **Z**

Score

90

It's only the originality factor that prevents the score from being higher.

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Mindscape

Tel: 01444 246333



GATEWAY2000

"You've got a friend in the business."

(Left) Verily Sire, the solar system in all its brass-plated glory.



Just a mention of the word 'tank' to **Patrick McCarthy** and he was rushing off to find his favourite orange and brown knitted tank-top. He looked so ridiculous that we didn't bother to tell him what we really meant...

Assault Rigs

(Below) It's a bit poncey
— for a tank, like.



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)

Processor: 486DX2/66

Graphics: VGA

Sound: SoundBlaster 16 or Pro and 100% compatibles; UltraSound

Controls: Keyboard, joystick

A CASUAL ONCE-OVER OF ASSAULT RIGS would probably prompt you to avoid it completely. It's sort of a tank game, but not a 'proper' one, and some of the screenshots look worryingly like an updated version of *Spectre Supreme*. It's also a sort of 3D platform game. And, (steady now) it's supposed to be set in "Cyberspace" — a concept usually associated with games that should have 'Dodgy Game Alert' printed across their cover and their lid

sealed with industrial hazard warning tape. ("Cyberspace" usually only gets used as a way to explain the pathetic lack of realism and logic in a shite game.) All of which shows how wrong the casual once-over can sometimes be. *Assault Rigs* is actually pretty playable. Ish.

Exterior decorating

Basically, it is a 3D platform game in a tank: there are various gems to collect, complicated level layouts (sometimes several "storeys" high), and minor puzzle elements, with huge arrows hinting at what to do to solve them printed on the walls. There are different weapon pick-

ups for you to fire at the enemy tanks, and gunposts and missile launchers that litter the levels. Among these you'll find homing missiles, bouncing shells and fly-by-wire bombs that you steer from a viewpoint in the nose.

The Cyberspace bit means that every few levels the backgrounds get a different theme, including a World War One-ish type look, a heavy industrial environment, and a (visually weak) VR zone. In each zone, your tank takes on an appropriate look, and there are three types — from speedy but weedy, to slow and sturdy. In practice, you're always much better off going for the heavy tank, because it's more than fast enough, and takes more hits.

Control freaks

As a converted PlayStation game you can guarantee that the controls, while fine on the psx, will be complicated in the extreme on the PC. And sure enough, they are. The trouble is, they're all over the place, and no allowance has been made for anything other than a two-button joystick. This means having to use keyboard presses for many functions: you might be better off playing entirely using this method. Even then, you'll find that you really do have to re-define

the keys in order to get anything approaching a workable configuration, the default key set-up being scattered all over the shop. It would have been a lot easier if they had just re-designed the whole thing to allow a *Doom*-style control method, which would suit the game down to its little pink toes. But they haven't.

Reservations

Minor control problems aside, *Assault Rigs* plays pretty well and in the later stages gets pretty action-packed, even at the easiest level. Some people may not be too keen on the re-drawing enemies: at first they're an irritant, but later you grow to look on them with a complicated mixture of emotions. Imagine having a rich and generous aunt who often visits you bearing lavish gifts, but is hopelessly incontinent and insists on sitting in your favourite chair, and you'll see what I mean. As well as the normal game, there are a couple of network shooty ones for up to eight people, too. Not bad, really, and quite likeable. **Z**

(Above) The Flat Earth Society just may have a point.

(Right) Do you suffer from oversized veins on your weapon? (Sorry.)



(Below) First-person viewpoint in the VR Zone. A stark, featureless place that appeals to existentialist poets (and that).



Score

78

Well worth a look.

Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Psygnosis

Tel: 0151-282 3000

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

NEWSFLASH! ... GP500 GETS POLE POSITION IN YOUR RACING SIMS!

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Some-fin new on PCCD



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will soon have your holding net bulging like Santa's sack.

You'll be hooked



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Culky's Fish-Off Trophy Bass vs

IT WAS IN AN EPISODE OF STINGRAY that I saw a large fish with glassy green eyes shoot two missiles at 'my' boys in uniform... the camera panned round... it then zoomed in through the creature's left eye and into the control room, where a weird beastly delivered its *raison d'être*... "Troy Tempest must DIE!" Indeedy.

It was that terrifying moment of my youth that embedded the mantra, "I must catch and kill all fish" deep in my tiny mind. But I'm lazy and that's too much of a tall order. I like fishing; I don't love it, I just like it. But I hate rain.

So I was pleased to have a go at two fishing sims, *Trophy Bass* by Sierra, and *TNN Bass* from Electronic Arts, the former being a realistic fishing sim, the latter more of a game about fishing.

Trophy Bass

Trophy Bass allows you to get started with a quick fish, but if you've got an hour or so, get yourself hooked into a tournament with up to 100 other anglers or 'enemies'. In tournament mode the weather conditions are set by the chip, but you can always get some fishun' tips from the redneck cotton-pickin' hillbillies who star on several tasty FMV clips (if you can decipher the Alabama accents that is). I sometimes think they'd rather leave their tackle in the pick-up and do their fishing from the bank with a pump-action sawn-off! But they do divulge some hot tips and you can't really ignore them simply because they sound like psychos.

Once you've chosen a lake and chugged your boat out to where you want to fish, you can track the blighters down with the on-board echo-sounder and pick out a rod and lure from the vast selection offered from your big tackle box (ooh-err missus!).

Casteth thy lure unto the water

Putting some 'sniffy' on your rod will increase the chance of a bite (*Steady there!* - Ed.). Casting is a little slow,



(Above) The whole lake is yours but don't go too far from the weigh-in... it'll cost ya!

(Above right) Look ma, fishes!

but seeing the fish darting and swimming around is a heart-warming sight and the closest you can get to having an aquarium in your monitor. Little fish chase and hide from you while big fat catfish laze in the shallows, occasionally chasing your lure. Sometimes they're shy, sometimes they've got more front - just like the real world in fact.

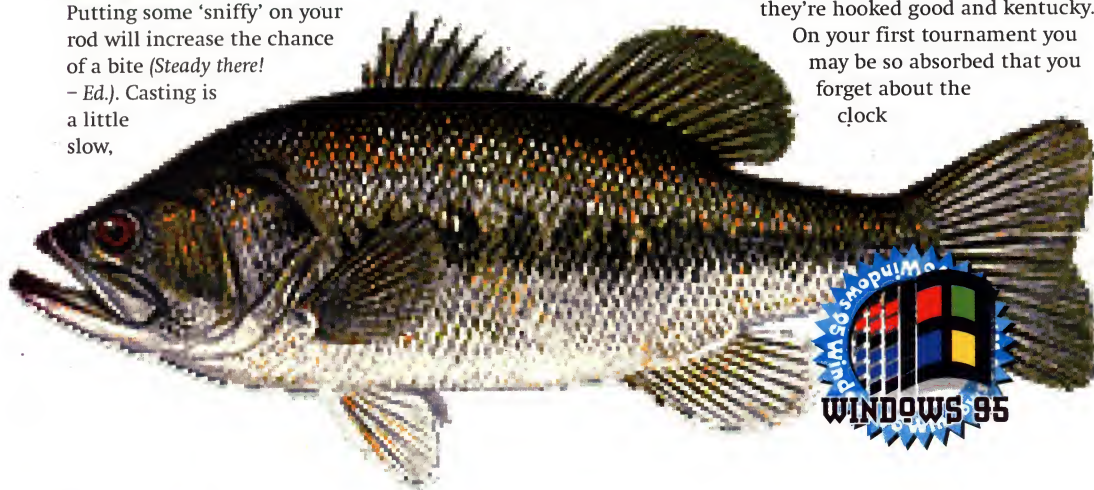
Tempting the fish with the lure is great sport, and when they finally bite the fighting action is hot and furious (or to sum up, SMART!), with tugs from the mouse pulling your rod up and down. Drag is effective and responsive and controlled from the keyboard.

Culky's Fishing Tips

To make sure the 'one that got away' doesn't, careful and skilled reeling in are a must. Big bass fight hard at first but tire after a bit, so be patient if you don't want to lose yours. Any small tiddlers have to be returned but the big guns are saved in the keep net. And just like in the real fishing world (such as when it rains and you get wet), the fish get bashful if you scare them and when they've been caught once they wise up... so make sure that when they're hooked, they're hooked good and kentucky.

On your first tournament you may be so absorbed that you forget about the clock

(Below) See - thanks to my big heavy action rod, I got one! Mmmm, bit of parsley sauce and I'm away!



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486/66

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Note: Windows 95 required

Score

85

Culky's pleasure entirely ma'am.

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Sierra

Tel: 01734 303322

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Distant memories of a '70s Technicolor TV series resurfaced as Cully got to grips with two fishing sims... "They killed my hero," he muttered by the monitor. "Who did?" we cautiously asked. "Them big fish what did it," he replied. We prudently left it at that.

TNN Bass Tournament



TNN Bass Tournament

HERE'S A SIM THAT'S NOT REALLY A SIM. TNN has the same hillbilly concept, and boasts the big gun in - Fish McFishburn himself in person on the FMV excerpts.

McFishburn is at the shop, ready to offer up lots of fishy tips the way only he knows how. The shop serves as the starting point where you can choose from several option screens: a map directing you to lakes sprawled across the greater half of America, the trophy board where you've yet to appear, and the tackle shop... You don't have enough dosh for the flashy boat yet, so forget it!

You begin with enough money to get a rod and a small boat, and once you've chosen a lake to fish, that's all you need.

Here fishy-fishy...

Clicking on the lake icon allows you to zip around in your boat and decide where to stop and hold up for a while. That useful widget, an echo-sounder, lets you identify where the pesky little fish are lurking.

When you've decided where you're gonna cast, you'll find that the screen looks good and the casting action looks and sounds good too, but the next bit will be a disappointment to serious fishy types. After your lure hits the water the screen changes to a view of the lure, and the way you reel in is very unrealistic (although it probably wouldn't bother an adventure game fan). And that's all I can say. I would rather see the lure from a bit further back - you're either on top of it or it's in the tackle box.

The fish 'swim' past the bait. I say 'swim' but it's too basic to be realistic. The movement is jerky and simple, and when the fish bite there's very little control, as reeling in is done by the mouse button and offers no freedom of direction. Also, you don't see the fish until they're right on top of your bait, and this decreases the thrill of seeing a fish tentatively approach your tasty little offering.

(Above) Grab yer map from the fish shop, pick a lake and fling your rod!

(Right) Ooh, exciting tackle 'n' stuff in Fish McFishburn's shop.

However, perhaps this is a deliberate ploy to reflect the game's true intentions - that it's not so much a sim but more an adventure game about fishing. *Trophy Bass* and *TNN Bass Tournament* are very different titles and will appeal to two distinct groups - fishy people and gamers respectively.

TNN Bass Tournament is more about money you earn while fishing, and the action probably hots up as you increase your budget and your status within Fish McFishburn's community. Just like that oldie *Sim City*, it's slow and sure. But I've got other fish to fry! **Z**



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486/66

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and 100% compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Score

80

A little soft ma'am, but you could get rich!

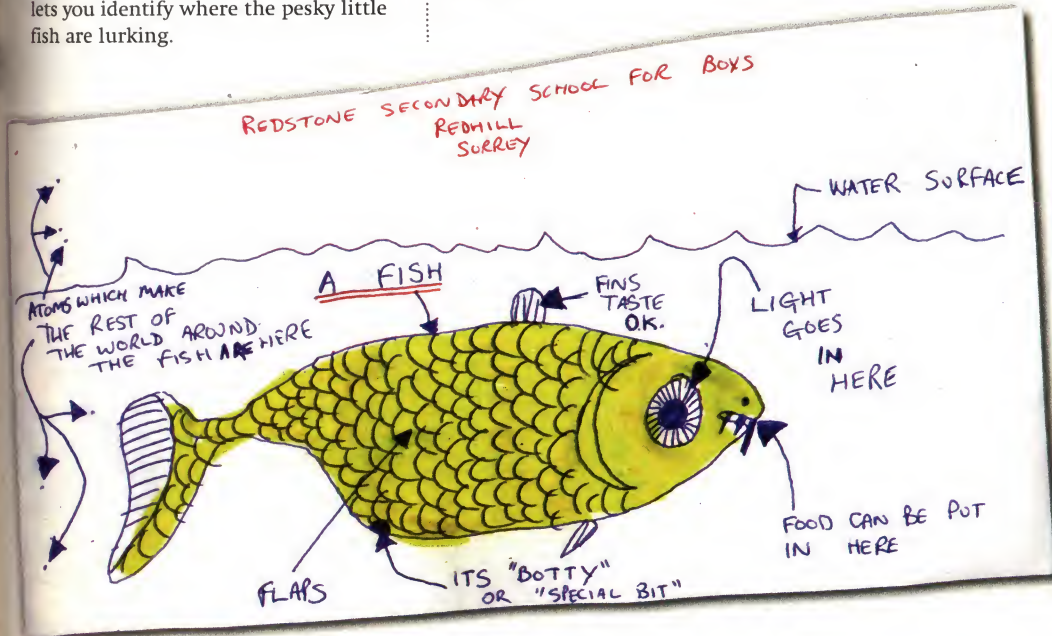
Price: £39.99

Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Tel: 01753 549442

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."



Having installed *Track Attack*, Duncan MacDonald was immediately wowed by the superb front end. What a wealth of options! And so beautifully presented, too! The CD whirled away: the first of a squillion imaginative courses loading into RAM. "Oh joy," thought Dunc...



Track Attack



OKAY, YOU'VE CHECKED THE SCORE (don't pretend you haven't), yet you're reading this *Track Attack* review anyway. So I ask myself why you're doing it. And (da-da) I know the answer, because I regularly do it myself when reading other games mags - be they PC ones, PlayStation ones, or whatever. You know how it goes: the screenshots look good; you consider yourself an expert of the genre under scrutiny, and you're wondering if the reviewer has missed the point somewhere along the line. So you want, basically, to (a) read between the lines, (b) assume the reviewer is lacking in game playing skills, (c) disagree with him/her to the tune of 100 per cent wherever possible, (d) form your own conclusion, based on the screenshots, (e) award your own score, and (f) go to the shops and buy the game regardless.

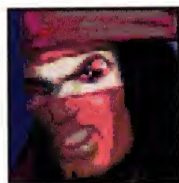
And hey! I've done it myself! I'm with you all the way! Blimey - we could have come from the same womb, for Christ's sake! You're talking to the person who deliberately ignored all the magazine reviews of *Daytona* on the Sega Saturn, dashed to the shop, was even told by the bloke behind the counter that "it's shit", but still willingly handed over thirty notes for a second-hand copy. What a tit! Such a fool!

Which would be roughly how I'd feel after forking out thirty notes for *Track Attack*. Okay, so it's 'cheap' compared to your average PC game, but it's hardly what you'd call budget, is it? Ten quid is budget. And anyway, if a game is almost

(Above) The word 'control' takes on a totally new meaning when applied to *Track Attack*...



(Below) Sticking two fingers up at your nearest opponent is not recommended when he looks as mean as this...



unplayable, even three quid is OTT. But I'm running away with myself here, so maybe it's time to get to the point.

Righto then. To get positive for just a moment, *Track Attack* looks absolutely brilliant on paper. The idea is that it's an arcade racer (with track-based power-ups and an 'inter-race shop' where you increase your chosen car's abilities - the better you do, the more money you make, the more 'ninja' your car becomes, and so on). It's not exactly original, I know, but there's more to come. The manual calls this flash of originality DTS (Dynamic Track System), and what DTS does is as follows: hit certain icons with your car during a race and you'll alter the track layout - either in front of you or behind, depending on the icon. You can make sliding blocks appear for example, increase the angle of ramps, add height to cambers, produce car destroying spikes, open and close short cuts, and on and on and on. And as I said before, it all sounds great on paper. However, at the end of the day it's *not* on paper, it's on your monitor - and it's here that the two major problems of *Track Attack* hit home with the force of a Tyson uppercut.

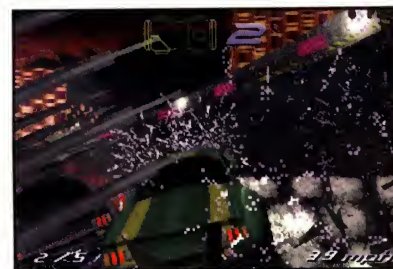
Problem One

Jerkovision! I reviewed *Track Attack* on a p75. Toggling the detail options to minimum and selecting the smallest viewing window available (ie the size of a postage stamp), the proceedings were just about passable in

'practice' mode. However, if you select 'race' mode, there tends to be more than just the one car on-screen. Uh-oh! Cue slideshow.

Problem Two

Control! Or, if you prefer, 'lack of control'. Wanna go left? Yup, you'll go left by cracky! *Track Attack* suffers from big-time Rotation Syndrome. It's as if your car revolves on a spindle rather than being 'guided' by its front wheels. Oh, and when Problem One is also in evidence... well, forget it. Z



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX4/100

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and 100% compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Score

65

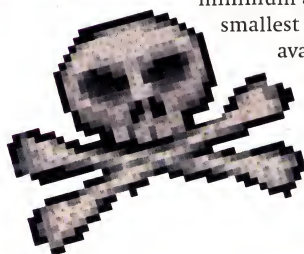
If you've got a Cray 9000 and love spinning uncontrollably into track-side scenery then this is for you!

Price: £29.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: MicroProse

Tel: 01454 893893

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."



PC ZONE

***Terra Nova* is certainly one of the best robot shoot 'em up games we've come across for a long time. The thing is though, it uses nearly every key on the keyboard so you have to be a double-jointed octopus to be able to get the most out of it!**

OPEN COMMS	TALK TO SQUAD MATE 2	TALK TO SQUAD MATE 3	TALK TO ENTIRE SQUAD
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**QUIT
OUT/CANCEL**



Q LOOK LEFT	W FORWARD FAST	E LOOK RIGHT	R LOOK UP
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T CYCLE TARGETS LEFT	Y CYCLE TARGETS RIGHT	0 OPTIONS PANEL
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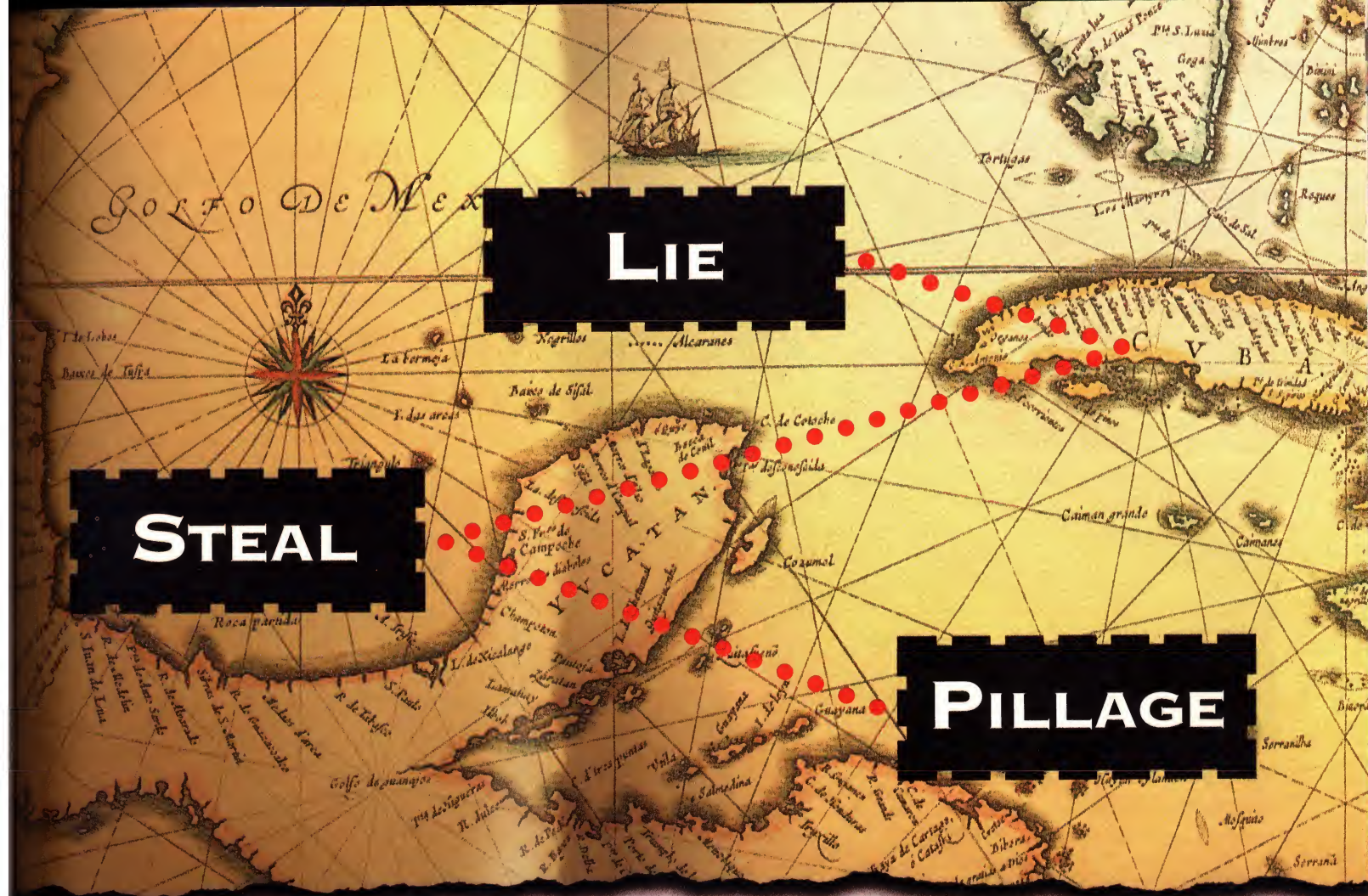
	[CYCLE TARGETS LEFT]	CYCLE TARGETS RIGHT	TAB TOGGLE MFDS
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TERA NOVA

This keyboard template has been created by *PC Zone* for purchasers of the game *Terra Nova*, published by Virgin. It is not approved or endorsed in any way by Virgin. All rights recognised.



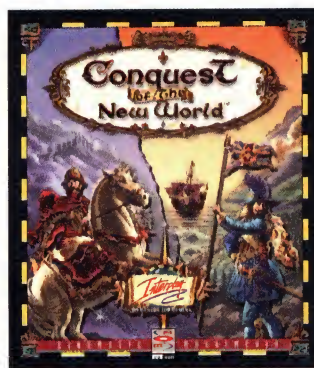
A TURN LEFT	S FORWARD	D TURN RIGHT	F CENTRE VIEW	G TOGGLE GOOGLES						' CROUCH					ENTER CALL DROP SHIP
Z SIDESTEP LEFT	X MOVE BACKWARDS	C SIDESTEP RIGHT	V LOOK DOWN	B 360° TURN	N RE-CENTRE MAP	M MAP MODE	SPACEBAR JUMP JETS				< MAP ZOOM OUT	> MAP ZOOM IN			SHIFT BOUND IN DIRECTION



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**"Sid Meier
should watch
his back"**

PC Format - Feb '96

Conquest of the New World

Interplay™

Chronicles Of The Sword



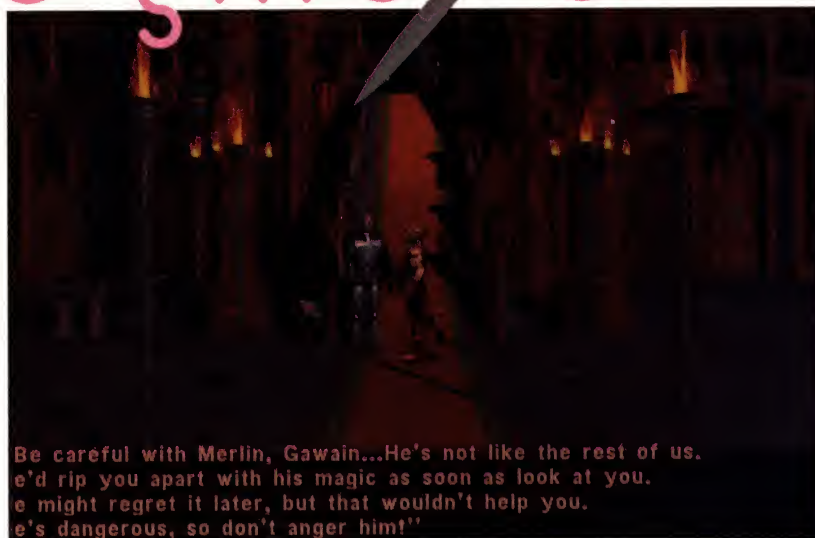
Guinevere was only thirteen when Arthur was supposed to have married her. **Paul Presley** feels a somewhat unnatural kinship to this Arthurian legend...

IT'S TIME TO GO ALL INTROSPECTIVE for a moment. I miss the good old days. I miss the days when adventure games were written by people whose only concern was to tell a story and tell it well. I miss the days when people weren't afraid of text on the screen, when Infocom games were held in high regard, and the term 'point-and-click' existed solely in interactive dictionaries. I miss typing "Go North".

Adventure games hit a kind of peak towards the end of this period, when LucasFilm (as was) were right on top of the world and challenge wasn't equated with boredom. But then the general attitude shifted: CGI machines were invented, rendered graphics came along and gave everyone their business cards, and the world of adventures died. Yup, right then and there, with the very first 3D-animated intro sequence. And now they all have them. Filling the CDs with

(Above) King Arthur does his 'Lord British' impression.

(Right) "So calling him 'Merly-werly-softyarse' wouldn't be a good idea then?"



rendered this and rendered that so that you can no longer enter a screen without waiting 30 seconds and missing all the subtlety. And graphic artists are in charge of the games - it's like putting Damien Hirst in charge of a sheep farm.

Chronicles Of The Sword should have been great. It's set in the time of King Arthur, it focuses on a knight who has been given very little airtime throughout history, and it doesn't have any FMV in it. It should have been great - but it isn't. Here's why...

Research, every little helps

The story is so trivial when you consider the potential of the subject matter, you would think it had just walked out of nursery school. Camelot is being threatened by Arthur's sister Morgana le Fay (who's also an evil sorceress), and it falls

on you to stop her. You, by the way, are Gawain, a newcomer to the castle of Camelot and you're eager to prove your worthiness to sit at the Round Table. Stopping her involves just about every fantasy cliché in the book, including fighting a skeleton, conquering a dragon, a magic ring, saving a maiden, dealing with fairies and so on. There are some nicely crafted puzzles to negotiate in a few of these separate areas, but they don't tend to meld into the game world too well. It's as if they're good puzzles in themselves but the subject matter surrounding them is irrelevant.

About four years ago Sierra released a game based on the Arthurian legends. I forget its name but it was based around Arthur's search for the Holy Grail. Okay, so *COTS* is about Gawain and not Arthur, but the point I'm trying to make is that

(Below) Gawain walks down a staircase and encounters a locked iron gate.

(Right) Some pictures speak for themselves. Let us just sit awhile and contemplate the splendour of this piece. (In other words you couldn't think of a caption - Ed.)



The Twelve Knights

So who were they? Everyone knows Lancelot, Arthur and the ever-smiling Gawain, but who were the other nine? It's a harder trivia question than naming the Magnificent Seven, The Dirty Dozen or the original Hair Bear Bunch.

Sir Percival

Not much is known about Percy other than his parents hated him (hence the name), and ever since joining the Round Table he was always put in charge of making the tea as punishment for having a girly name.

Sir Loin

A real ladies man, Sir Loin was well known by the maidens of Britain as the Knight from Comealot. An untimely accident with a low-flying arrow forced him to retire early, although he continued his knightly duties until the day he died.

Sir Lee

Miserable as sin, Lee was often barred from meetings due to his annoying habit of disagreeing with everything that was said and moaning that his sword wasn't sharp enough (a complaint that always made Sir Loin giggle uncontrollably).

Sir Number Six

After a while Arthur got a bit bored with the newly arriving knights and just didn't really try when it came to the names...

Sir Daemonkiller Sureblade of Arangorn ...and then he started to get a bit carried away...

Sir Fred

...and then he settled down again.

Sir Reelism

One of the few knights to enter battle with the war cry of "Wednesday! Look at the cows, Madelaine." No one could ever figure out why.

Sir Ver

Was used by the other knights as a kind of central hub, usually for storing all their unwanted equipment. (No more techie jokes - Ed.)

Sir Positerry

Often left the field of battle early due to "urgent other business". (That's enough Knights of the Round Table - Ed.)

(Right) Gawain admires the blacksmith's mighty weapon. (That's it, say goodbye Paul - Ed.)



Sierra's title was written by Christy Marx, an Arthurian enthusiast with a passion for her subject - and this came across in the game. Things seemed real and authentic, and you felt as though you were actually learning about Arthur as you went along; consequently you became more and more drawn into the action. I remember a great feeling of satisfaction when I finally finished it (which is no mean feat in itself). COTS, on the other hand, is dull, consisting of some medieval stereotypes presented in a fancily-rendered environment.

Speed walking

But don't get me wrong. I've nothing against graphics. I'll be the first to say, "Wow! Look at the polygons on that!" when something flashy whizzes by, and COTS certainly has more than its fair share of "Wow!" moments - but come on, they aren't the be-all and end-all of an interactive experience. Having said that, they're nice, although there is a slight problem in that they move a bit too slowly around the screen. There are a fair amount of redundant areas to trawl through when wandering around the game world, and an updating map with some sort of "Go straight to..." button wouldn't have gone amiss.

'Tis but an end

So, basically, if you want a couple of nice puzzles and some lovely graphics - but little else - buy *Chronicles Of The Sword*. If you want a decent, gripping and well-told story about the legends

of King Arthur, go to your local video shop and rent a copy of *Excalibur* (it's a brilliant film, made even more so by the fact that Cheri Lunghi gets her kit off). Or if you want a laugh, there's always that Monty Python thing... **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Score

68

A triumph of style over content.

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Psygnosis

Tel: 0151-282 3000

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

(Below) Gawain: pious, contemplative, reflective, great fun at parties.

(Below right) The Round Table lives up to its name.



A stone cross."





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Conquest Of The New World



Civilised the entire world already? Simmed every city you can lay your hands on? Try the New World for size: it's primitive, it's vast and it's dying to be discovered. Andrew Wright ventures out to try a new conquer and build-style strategy game.

CONQUEST OF THE NEW WORLD IS an epic strategy game that takes you back in time and into the role of a 15th Century explorer representing one of the European powers. You play the part of the British, Dutch, Spanish, French or Portuguese – whoever takes your fancy – and your objective is to get across the Atlantic in your little wooden boat and carve out sweet chunks of profitable land.

Although there are variations on the same theme, for the most part it means mapping out the New World using your ships and a handful of explorers, finding a good spot to settle and defending your folks from other powers or hostile natives. The better your settlement, the more goods you produce in the form of metals, gold, crops and wood – and the more goods you produce, the more ships, soldiers, settlers, explorers and additional settlements you can create. And the more soldiers and ships you have, the more arse you can kick. Simple, innit?

More variations than Heinz

However, one of the great strengths of *Conquest* is that you can play it in literally dozens and dozens of different ways. The various powers can be given

(Above) And lo, in the beginning... Now you gotta climb a few mountains, chop some wood, start a farm...

(Above right) ...and you'll get to this stage. (In a few hours if you're lucky.)



different personalities, and you can even be politically correct and adopt the persona of the poor old natives. There are different ways to win too. You can play for exploration bonuses and gain points for new rivers and mountains you find, or you can play economics and buy and trade your way to success. Wargamers will no doubt plump for the military option to build extra infantry, cavalry and artillery units as well as warships. Games can be won on points alone (after a certain number of turns), or for being the last surviving power. *Conquest* is completely network-capable too, so you could get some rare old head-to-head bunfights set up.

The graphics are staggering. Close-ups of the colonies reveal some really nice touches, from occasional grizzly bears and duellists outside your town hall to workers diligently chopping, sawing and digging away. You can zoom right out or right in and the interface is neat and well designed too; there's also a choice of five sound effect channels.

Battles are fought almost board game-style, with specific rules for movement and combat. It's quite easy to get the hang of the combat, and although there are only three types of military unit (apart from leaders), they can have different levels and fighting abilities depending on your colony's success. On the other hand, you start off with



(Right) The board game-style combat doesn't leave you with many tactical options.

muskets and artillery and end up with... muskets and artillery... Alright if that's your bag, I suppose.

Is this thing on valium or what?!

The main problem with *Conquest* is that in two respects it's slow. And I really do mean slo-o-o-ow. On a high-end 486 the pauses between each turn can drive you mad – even on a fast Pentium it's still excruciating. A few contemporary stories are shown on screen to read while you wait, but the fact that some are cut off in mid-flow makes it just all the more antagonising. Worse still perhaps, the game is slow to get off the ground. It takes about four hours' play before things get juicy; by 'juicy' I mean to the point where you can actually do something other than (yawn) watch your colonists chop wood.

But don't get me wrong, *Conquest* is a superb strategy game with plenty to challenge the exhausted *Civilization*/ *Colonization* buff. But you've got to work at it – and bloody hard too. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486 (Pentium recommended)

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Score

75

Slow, cumbersome and lacking in excitement.

Price: £TBC **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Interplay

Tel: 01628 423666

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."



"Oh please let me review the new *Zork* game, I'll do anything," said **Chris Anderson**, before we sent him off to knock down the Empire State Building with a small peanut.

Zork Nemesis

(Right) This corridor leads to some doors. Which also lead to some more doors, which lead to some puzzles, which lead to some more doors. Voilà you've finished the game!



In perspective

Like *Nemesis*, *Myst* is very pretty and quite atmospheric. However, *Nemesis* gives you more freedom of movement. *The 11th Hour* doesn't give you *any* freedom of movement, it just moves you from one room to another and plonks puzzles in front of you, and so can be dismissed as being crap. *Return To Zork* has lots of characters, some devious puzzles, and is miles better than the rest.

Return To Zork

Nemesis

Myst

The 11th Hour

HMM, I FIND MYSELF IN A VERY difficult position here. I've been raving about *Nemesis* for the last couple of months without having played it properly. I even raved about it in the preview we ran on it last month. Okay, I know it was a stupid thing to do, but sometimes you just can't help getting over-enthusiastic about something you've really been looking forward to. I mean, the graphics just looked so amazing and the last *Zork* game was brilliant, so I guess I just got a little bit carried away. (Cough up Chris, what's wrong? - Ed.) What's wrong?

Well, there's nothing actually *wrong* with it. It just hasn't turned out to be the *type* of game I was expecting. Let me explain (Yes, that would help - Ed). If you look at the way the adventure genre has developed over the last year or so, you'll

notice that some software houses have been copping out and producing crap interactive movie things with lousy actors in them (*Phantasmagoria*, *Ripper*, *Critical Path* etc), while others have been developing pretty games with lots of static screens where you had plenty of objects to mess about with, but never got to meet any characters (*The 7th Guest*, *Labyrinths Of Time*, *Myst* et al). *Nemesis* sadly falls into the latter category.

Don't get me wrong, I know there are lots of people who adore pretty games where you do nothing other than hop from one room to the next solving puzzles, it's just that, well, I'm not one of them. So you see, my disappointment

with *Nemesis* is purely on a personal level. Having played and loved *Return To Zork*, the last game in the series, I was rather stupidly expecting *Nemesis* to be fairly similar, with better graphics or something (you know, the sort of stuff they usually do for sequels). Seeing as this hasn't happened, I'll simply give you a report on my experiences with the game, and you can make up your own mind whether it's your sort of thing or not. Let's start with the plot...

Stupid, stupid

Three alchemists have rather stupidly allowed themselves to be placed under a curse by the evil, unfriendly (and no

(Below) Hooray, I've found the alchemists. Pity they don't have much to say for themselves.

(Right) Drain the pool and find the switch to... open a door.





(Above) Memorise the notes played on the flute to solve another problem, opening another door.



(Above right) Move these boards around and you'll find a hidden door which leads to... another puzzle. Yawn!

doubt unpopular) Nemesis. Because of this, the silly old buggers are stuck in coffins, completely bored, and with no hope of getting out. Yup, it's up to you to travel through the forbidden lands, find out what this Nemesis bloke has been up to, remove the curse, and free our intellectually challenged alchemist friends. Why? Well, because you *bought* the game so, er, you may as well have a go, I suppose. Oh hang on, I remember now: according to the game's manual, if you *don't* remove the curse, the Nemesis is waiting in the wings to imprison you along with the other three, and let's face it, who wants to spend eternity in the company of that lot? Anyway, that's the gist of it. It sounds exciting (well sort of) but maybe it isn't...

But where have all the people gone?

My first impressions of *Nemesis* were extremely good indeed. The music is very moody and atmospheric, and the graphics, as you can see from the screenshots, are absolutely stunning. They look even better still when you find yourself doing a full 360 degree turn around the part of the environment you're in and discover you can see everything around you.

This is an absolute first for this type of game, and is something that I reckon other software houses would do well to incorporate into their own adventures. Unfortunately, no matter where you go, or how many times you spin around

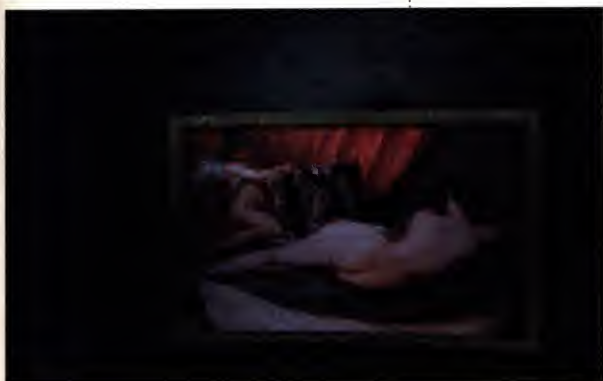
the playing area, you won't find anyone to talk to. If you read through the booklet that comes with the game, you will discover that the forbidden lands (which provide the setting for *Nemesis*) have been evacuated. This of course explains why you never come across any characters to interact with.

I've got to say that this is my biggest single problem with the game. After only half an hour of playing it, I started getting uncomfortable (and bored) with wandering around the place looking at, and solving various puzzles. After just two hours I began to question why I was playing the game at all. I thought that things were looking up at one point, though: I found a puzzle in which I had to memorise a series of notes in order to get through a locked door. Having managed to solve the puzzle I was rewarded with the pleasant sound of the big door opening behind me. I hurried into the room to find... another bloody puzzle.

This is basically what *Nemesis* is all about: solve a puzzle and you'll be swiftly rewarded with another one. If you liked any of the games mentioned in the "In Perspective" section, you'll more than likely love *Nemesis* – but if you didn't, I suggest you give it a miss and find something more interesting to do, like watching paint dry. **Z**

(Below) The lady in the picture gives you much needed hints on solving the puzzles.

(Below right) Mirror, mirror on the wall, I bet you're a door really.



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2/66

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Mouse Note: Windows 95 required

Score

65

Add 20 to this score if you love the *Myst* games. I'm not a fan of them though.

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Activision

Tel: 0181-742 9400

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Fast Attack

Fast Attack is a very complicated submarine simulation. It's so complicated in fact, that it requires two people to explain it; so cue **Duncan MacDonald** and his wife, **Pamela Anderson**.

DUNCAN'S REVELATION... The intro above is true. If you read the tabloids, you'll have been suckered into believing that Pamela Anderson married Tommy Lee last year – and that they're now expecting silicon babies and stuff, in California. Ha ha! But the reality is actually very different. What happened was that Pammy married me. We met at a Hollywood party in mid-December and tied the knot in Nogales, Arizona, 24 hours later. (For what it's worth, she wore an orange bikini and the bridesmaids were dressed up as robots.) Since then she's been living with me in sweet marital bliss in my flat in south London. She loves it! It's all so 'new' to her – the Old Kent Road, the New Kent Road, Tesco's at the Elephant and Castle shopping centre, and so on. We're both as Happy As Larry. But I promised her – as a sort of 'honeymoon present' – that I'd let her help me out, one day, on a game review. And that time has now come. So, take it away, Pammy...

Introducing the game...

Pammy: *Fast Attack* is a submarine game which, er... Oh! Remind me – what's a submarine again, Squeaky?

Me: It's like a ship, but it can go underwater. Remember, darling? In the bath? My 'periscope'?



(Below) The very scary periscope screen. To make full use of it you need to be able to work out logarithms in your head (or something).

(Right) Your crew, who are apparently nuclear-powered like the sub... They sit motionless for months and months on end and never, ever, ever go to the toilet.



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (minimum)

Processor: 486 and above

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster

Controls: Mouse **Note:** Windows 95 required

Pammy: (Giggles) Yes! I've got it now – the bubbles out of your bottom!!!

Me: No silly, that was 'Mr Torpedo'.

Pammy: (Giggles) Oh. I've got it wrong again. Maybe you'd better explain submarines to these people.

Me: No, go on, you do it – after all, you said you wanted to.

Pammy: I don't think I can. Would you take me to the shops now? I want to buy some really tiny clothes.

Me: But we've only just started, and there's so much more to explain to the readers, darling. I'll tell you what... how about you outline the scenario?

Pammy: What's an 'outline scenario'?

Me: Er, it's like you have to read a 'story'. Look, it's here, in the manual. I'll point at the letters as you go...

Pammy reads aloud

Pammy: You are in charge of a 6881 nuclear-powered attack submarine, which operates in all ocean environ...

Me: Environments. It means, er, 'different places'.

Pammy: (Giggles, then continues) The 6881

is fast and quiet and has an advanced reactor which gives it months of submerged operational range. It has the most sophisticated naval (giggle) sensor, communication and weapon technology available. (Giggles again, loses the plot completely, and falls over)

Me: And the missions, darling? Tell them what it says about the missions...

Pammy: (From the floor) Your ongoing mission is to defend US interests in strategic naval hotspots around the globe, including the Persian Gulf, the Adriatic Sea, the Medirrat... Meediyt... the Meditareeneayne (giggle), the Sea of Japan and the, um, Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap (giggle). You may be called upon to attack hostile convoys or





naval groups, attack land targets with cruise missiles, break blockades, hunt for mines, or even duel with similarly armed enemy fast attack submarines. (She wheezes as if she's just read War And Peace aloud in one breath) Phew. That's the hardest bit of acting I've ever done! Was I good? Tell me truthfully.

Me: You were brilliant, darling. Superb.

Pammy: Do you really think so? I thought so. But I really need to go and look in the mirror now. Can I go look in the mirror? Please? (Practices her most persuasive pout)

Me: Of course you can, my angel. Just hurry right back to me now!

Pammy takes some time out to reflect

Sorry about that. I know she's a bit thick, but I didn't marry her for her brains, obviously. Anyway, while she's absorbed with studying her reflection in the mirror (again), it'll give me a chance to get on with the review.

Right, there are essentially two types of sub sim: the first takes place in WWII and is like a typical Dickie Attenborough movie, while the second is based on *The Hunt For Red October* or what have you, and tends to be crammed full of graphs, switches and buttons. *Fast Attack*, as you might have guessed, is of the latter variety.

As has become the norm with submarine games, all the 'action' is accessed via a static screen containing hotspots which whisk you off to various locations around the ship, like to the particularly scary Sonar Room, for example. In fact the prefix 'particularly

(Above) Er, uuum, um well, what you have here is your... er... well, it's the sonar. Or one of its modes, anyway. Um, sometimes when you press the buttons not a lot happens, unless you've, um, already pressed some different ones, in which case lots of lights come on and then you... Er... Eh?

(Above right) Ahh! Much simpler. That's an oil rig that is! On fire!

(Below) Press four squillion buttons, work out the cube root of 291,887 in your head, and you're treated to some FMV of your torpedo being loaded.

(Right) A direct hit with my weird 'iceberg' missile! (I think they're water splashes, actually - Ed.)



scary' could equally well be added to all nine stations of *Fast Attack* operation. Just look at the screenshots again. See? Even the periscope is slightly worrying. This is *not* seat-of-the-pants stuff. No way! This is modern warfare. You need to be Stephen Hawking just to be able to open one of the four outer torpedo tube doors. And if I can briefly mention the Sonar Room again... "Yaaaarrggghh!!!" And I don't even want to *think* about the WLR-9 Room. Etcetera.

Mind you, having said that, there is, of course, the other side of the coin: namely the great satisfaction gleaned from mastering all these nightmarish complexities. The inevitable smug glow follows. Yes, there's no denying that once you begin to sort of know what you're doing some of the time, *Fast Attack* is a supremely engrossing and atmospheric game, and I can recommend it wholeheartedly to fans of *688 Attack* and *Seawolf*. (You'll know roughly what to expect, after all.) However, if you're a bit of a newbie to this whole submarine caper, I reckon *Fast Attack*'s solid brick wall learning curve is going to put you off the genre big-time, which would be a shame. Still, maybe you could test the water with the fab WWII *Aces Of The Deep* from Dynamix and then, when you've finished with that, you could come back and try this one. Yes? And then you could even join the... oh, hang on, Pammy's on her way back, she's finished her mirror-gazing.

Pammy: I wanna go shopping. I wanna go shopping, I wanna go shopping, I wanna go shopping...

Me: Of course you do, darling. Which shop shall we go to? Woolworth's? Hey, I know, they sell nice clothes in Millets!

Pammy: No, I wanna go to the divorce shop!

Me: Eh? (Stunned) What... the solicitors?

Pammy: (Petulantly) Yes yes yes yes yes! I wanna go back home!

Me: (Sigh) Oh well, I always knew it wouldn't last forever. z

Score

86

Ultra-complex but ultimately rewarding sub-aquatic shenanigans.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Sierra

Tel: 01734 303322

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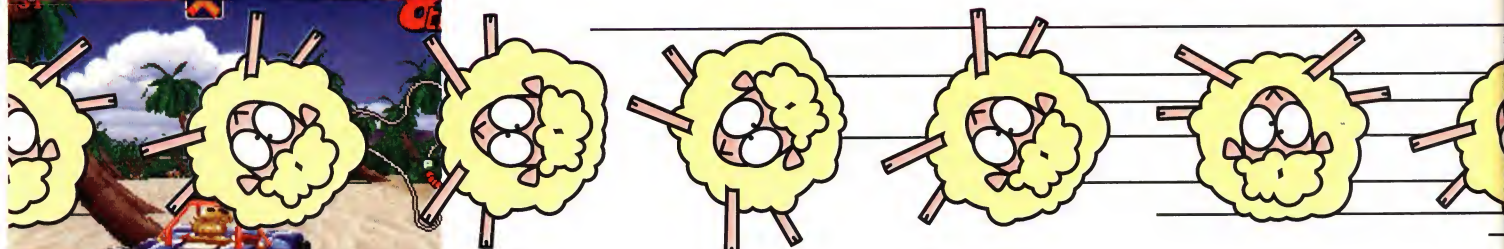
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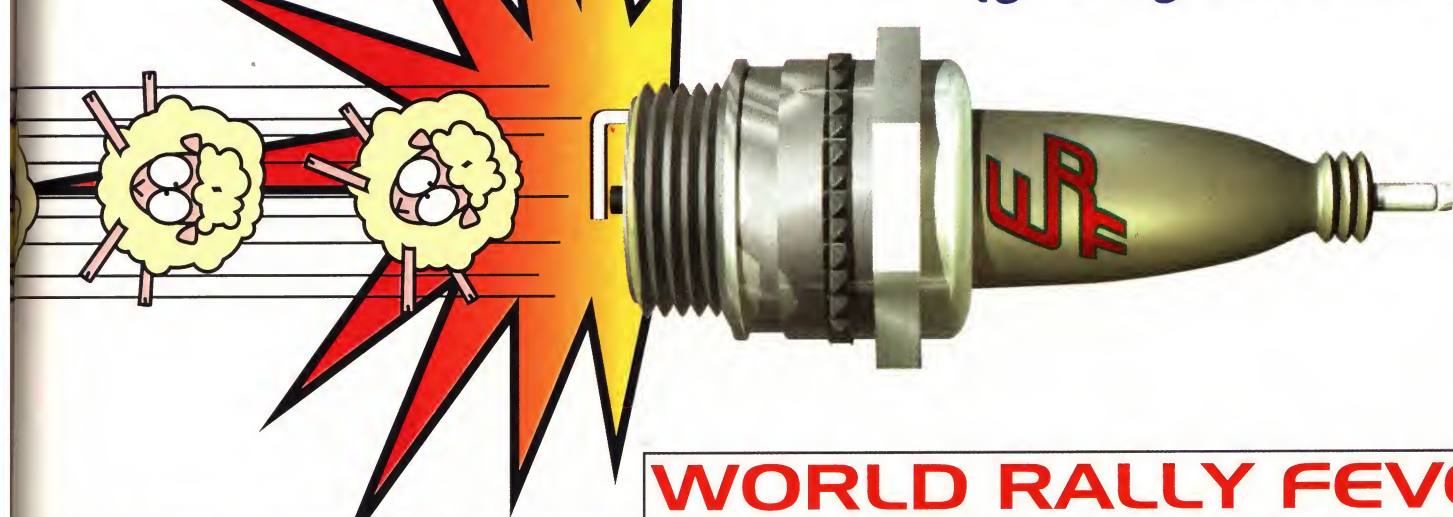
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PLACE OF BIRTH: BRIMFLEE, ESSEX, ENGLAND
SHOE SIZE: 10
DISTINGUISHING FEATURES: RED TEETH, GREEN EYES, COLOUR COORDINATING
FAVE CHRISTMAS: FENNY PAUL SATYR

COL

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VIEW

SOUND OPTIONS

CD ☐ ☒ ☐

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Duncan MacDonald made what he thought was a quite good 'Silent Thunder, A-10 Revenge' intro gag when he wrote the preview of this game a couple of issues ago, but seeing as we've already used up our quota of fart jokes this month he was totally and utterly stumped. Doh!



Silent Thunder



OH DEAR, OH DEAR... IF THERE WERE sub genres for flight sims, I guess there'd be just the two: 'realistic' ones and 'arcadey' ones. *Silent Thunder*, unfortunately, hasn't quite decided which category it wants to slot into – and there are a couple of special 'surprises' in store, too. Bear with me...

The game opens pretty much as standard, with your usual options of single missions or campaign mode (Columbia, Gulf and Korea, hard fact fans). "Aha!" I thought to myself. "Realistic seen-it-all-before simulation time!" So I made my choice, selected my weapons load (one of which is napalm, so a brownie point there), and then I suddenly found myself in... Jerko World! Ye gods! Time for some serious detail toggling. It's <SHIFT>P> for the graphic options, then. But what's this? The keyboard didn't seem to work. I pressed <G> yet my landing gear would not lower... I pressed <C> yet no chaff appeared. Yes, problem confirmed.

To cut a long story short, I eventually found a README file on expected joystick naughtiness. It blamed Windows 95, and I can sympathise, because I blame Windows 95 for lots of things as well.



(Left) The mission area is very small and you can't fly over 3000 feet. On the bright side, this makes it very difficult to get lost.

(Right) By the time Billy had got back to base a rogue fart butt had levelled it and killed everyone. Remember kids, smoking kills.

Nevertheless, that meant I was going to have to try and play *Silent Thunder* on the keyboard alone... and we all know how unpleasant that can be, don't we?

Oh dear, oh dear...

So back to the game and my first port of call was aerobatics – bugger the AAA and SAMS, I was all for a low altitude upside-down jaunt across the nearby sea. And things were going rather well for about 120 seconds, but then all of a sudden a disembodied chick's voice said: "You are straying out of the mission area." "Oh no, not one of those," I thought. Then another voice: "Time running out, sir!" Bugger. Then my mission was aborted.

I don't know about you, but there's nothing more annoying than a flight sim in which you're constrained to a very small geographic area. And I'm not just talking about the X and Y co-ordinates here, either, because I didn't have much joy with the Z either. Can you guess the service ceiling of the A-10 in this game? Well, it's a tad under 3000 feet. I mean to say... you can go higher than that in a car! (Eh? – Ed.) And in case you're yelling that the A-10 is a low-level attack aircraft, all I can reply is that I know, but my point is that it can go higher than 3000 feet if the pilot wants it to. (I wanted it to and it wouldn't!)

Oh dear, oh dear...

By now I was treating *Silent Thunder* as a simple arcade game. Except it was far from simple, a fact compounded by the jerkovision and the necessity (in my case) to use the keyboard arrow keys. One particular example was a successful low-level (100 feet) Maverick attack on two tanks. And the result? They blew up, but unfortunately their nifty 'explosion graphics' ate into the already iffy frame rate like Billy Bunter at a picnic after an enforced fast. My attempts to control



the A-10 had suddenly become a case of 'Oh no, everything's become completely uncontrollable in a jerk-tastic fashion'. Cue crashing noise.

I could go on about all kinds of other annoying stuff, such as the cluttered and unhelpful in-game map, the enemy planes that seem to be able to turn on a sixpence, and so forth – but I'll try to end on a positive note, which is hard, but... oh, I've got it. You know how some game engines cry out that they're not quite up to the job they're being used for, but they could actually be pretty reasonable if employed in a different way? Well, how about the *Silent Thunder* engine adapted to prop up a tank game? Or a Vietnam War soldier doofer, or Afghan Rebels, or a Czechoslovakian mountain goat herding simulation or something? What do you reckon? (Send your suggestions to Anne Robinson.) **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2/66

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Note: 35Mb hard disk space, double-speed CD drive and Windows 95 required

Score

60

A not very good A-10 simulation – although it looks quite good in the screenshots, admittedly.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Sierra

Tel: 01734 303322



GATEWAY2000

"You've got a friend in the business."

And now for something completely different... **Andrew Wright** looks at the third title in SSI's "General" series, a weird kind of sci-fi-cum-fantasy battle in which anything goes...

Fantasy General



IF YOU'RE ON TO A WINNER, KEEP A tight hold on it – that's what they (the clever bods) say, and it's also what SSI and Mindscape have done. Not content with the super-successful *Panzer General* and its follow-up, *Allied General*, the same basic combat and movement engine used in those titles now plays host to something more way out. *Fantasy General* is a strange blend of fantasy and science fiction, in which knights and archers do battle with all kinds of weird and wonderful creatures.

By weird and wonderful I don't mean the usual fare of goblins, ogres and orcs. Oh no. They're there, of course, but the 120 or so unit types range from humans (swordsmen, pikemen and cavalry for example) to death knights and dragons, and then to mechanical monsters such as flying steam-powered castles and men made of bronze – there are even steam-assisted elephants, musketeers hanging

(Above) Choose your character and save the world. Okay, so it's a fantasy world but we all have to start somewhere...

(Above right) A different army and a different opponent every time means you have to develop your strategies accordingly.

(Above far right) It's a bit disconcerting when you first come up against Mech troops (the rockety-shaped things are Screammers).

(Below) You can keep your tanks and planes – I want more wolf riders...



from balloons and flying monkeys. I know it sounds daft, but believe it or not, it works.

There are three modes of play: individual scenarios, campaign or play by mail. The individual scenarios are enjoyable, but the real meaty bit is the campaign. The plot twists and turns as you guide your army from continent to continent, researching more advanced technology and upgrading your units to become even more powerful.

The sequence of battles is linear but the terrain maps are randomly generated each time you play, as are the opposing units. In terms of long-term playability this places *Fantasy General* near the top of the wargame league, and as you can play one of four different characters, each with different powers, it's hard to see how you can play the same game twice.

Wargamers spookey bit

There are ten basic unit categories – light and heavy infantry, light and heavy cavalry, skirmishers, archers, sky hunters, bombardiers, siege engines and spellcasters – each endowed with their own upgrade paths. For example, your heavy infantry move up from warbands to pikemen, legionaries, samurai and heavy spearmen. Deciding how much of your hard-won gold you should spend on upgrading or buying which units is often the hardest part.

Skirmishers open up a new hit-and-run form of combat and all in all it's much more exciting than *Panzer General* because of the greater range of moves and counter-moves. Add heroic single characters and dozens of spells, special abilities and magical items, and you've got a real game on your hands.

If you prefer playing against a real person rather than the computer, the play by mail option allows you to choose maps, forces and all kinds of other

advantages. Unfortunately there's no network or head-to-head feature, which is a big shame, but the AI is well up to the job and will certainly make you pay close attention to tactics.

SSI have opted for the *Panzer General* interface and engine rather than the Windows-based one used for *Allied General*, but that doesn't detract from the game at all. For my money *Fantasy General* has got to be the most exciting strategy wargame of the year so far. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 386DX/33

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Note: MS-DOS 5.0 (or later) required

Score

92

Time to throw away your tanks – *Fantasy General's* where it's at.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: SSI/Mindscape
Tel: 01444 246333

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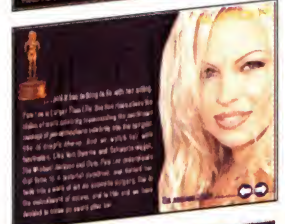
A Dennis Publication

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

Windows
MCP2 strongly recommended
Windows 3.1 (or later) with DOS 6.2
(or later)
486 or Pentium PC required
4 Megabytes FREE RAM (6 recommended)
Sound Card (Most modules)
13" VGA or SVGA monitor
Quicktime 2.02 for Windows (supplied)
CD-ROM drive (double speed or better recommended)

Macintosh
Macintosh System 7
68030 processor required
60040 or better strongly recommended
4 Megabytes FREE RAM (6 recommended)
13" colour screen (256 colour)
Quicktime 2.0 + Apple Multimedia Tuner (supplied)
CD-ROM drive (double speed or better recommended)

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Terra Nova: Strike Force Centauri



Patrick McCarthy likes nothing better than a thoughtful, non-violent game featuring small fluffy animals with big eyes and shopping for dolphin-friendly rusk-based goods. And we like nothing better than giving him something else entirely.

IT'S THE FUTURE AGAIN. I SAY THIS because unless my memory deceives me, it was the future last month, too. You are Nikola ap Io (distant cousin to famous space frontiersman E.I. ap Io), and you're one of the finest chaps in the galaxy – a bit of a whiz with a grenade launcher, expert mixer of complicated cocktails and world Scrabble champion: in short, an all-round good egg. You've just been transferred to Strike Force Centauri as a squad leader, a position of some responsibility for one so young. But then you did sleep with the boss.

Inside Soap

Strike Force Centauri was set up by colonists to combat the threat of space pirates, who keep raiding their planets, drinking rum and singing bawdy songs until all hours of the day and night. The constant squawking of parrots and clanking of heavy earrings is getting on everyone's nerves, and so the aforementioned elite force has been set up to see them off. Like all futuristic games involving the use of armour-plated bodysuits, there are Clans involved, which always helps to introduce a bit of a soap-opera element,



and provides loads of tedious background reading: the history of the clans; the principles of the various political movements in operation around the galaxy; how to make a meringue rise properly in a high-gravity situation; and so on. (The foremost political movement is Publicanism, which you might think would be dedicated to the idea of giving everyone a pub to run, but is actually communism without the economic restrictions.)

I've no idea why we always get this sort of stuff. Presumably, programmers and designers are convinced that, while the average punter will happily fire pulse-weapons at donkeys, they'll feel a lot better if they know the donkeys' personal history, where it went to school and who its best friend is. I can't stand it myself, but someone must like it or they wouldn't

do it... unless they all harbour a secret urge to create "litterachure". Perish the thought.

Take a Break

Anyway, this Strike Force is supposed to be above all that; unfortunately, you find out pretty darned quick that not only do Clan politics still have a big influence on everyday life, but the pirates are not what they seem, either. They get a lot more heavily-armoured, and rather more skilled, very quickly. It soon becomes apparent that they're being funded by Hegemony, an evil organisation that runs good old planet Earth and wants to run everyone else's planet, too. And so the plots and subplots develop, and the cut-scenes load, and the background is filled out for you by actors... and I suppose, if we have to have all this stuff, it's not too badly

(Bottom) Er... bang, or something.

(Centre bottom) Billy enjoys hill walking, knitting and amateur dramatics.





done, and does give a context to the missions. (One conversation puzzled me: a female Strike Force member revealed that her ship got lost on a mission and she was in suspended animation for 200 years. And Nikola promised to help her find her children... surely they'd scarcely be in the first flush of youth any more? Shouldn't the search start at the death records office? Maybe I wasn't paying attention...)

I admit to being a bit disappointed when I first started playing the game – the graphics could be better, the lasers could sound more like a weapon and less like a something a dermatologist would use to remove a wart... that sort of thing. But as I played it, I grew more fond of it. There are a wealth of movement and control buttons to get used to, and sometimes in the middle of a scrap you'll find yourself wishing for a few extra limbs to control things. There's an in-game tuition section, but you still need to work out what to do when it tells you. Also, I can't imagine ever bothering to learn all the quick key-presses used to order my squad members around. But the commands do work – tell them to keep to cover, for example, and you'll see them following you on the overhead map, darting from rocky outcrop to bush. Their caution makes you feel quite protective toward them.



The landscape isn't that wonderful, but it looks better at the higher detail setting, and can be used to advantage on missions. You can sneak through canyons, struggle up and over mountains and thanks to the independent head controls, look down at the scary drop and wet yourself (and the people below, I suppose) and... well, generally have fun with mounds and crevices.

TV Quick

The equipment side of things is better – there are loads of weapons and specialised dooberies to stick on your utility belt, and even some fast-moving, remote-controlled hovering cameras that you can use to scout the land (until they get shot down by pirates). Another handy helpmate is the navigation marker, which you can stick down anywhere you want on a map quickly and easily, and which will then appear on the landscape itself as a kind of 3D projected pyramid, and on your HUD as a waypoint.

There are three types of suit, and three planets which have different gravities, so that projectile weapons will have to have their shot-trajectories adjusted to account for the differing pull on the bullet (or grenade, or custard pie, or whatever). There's also a snazzy full 360 degree viewing mode and infra-red vision, which is useful not only at night, but during bad weather.



(Above) One of the most novel effects featured is the inclusion of weather. The rain (although looking a bit crap in the screen shot) adds a tremendous atmospheric effect to the proceedings.

(Above left) Although the graphics are a bit grainy, you do get used to them after prolonged exposure. These still shots do them no justice whatsoever.

(By the way, try not to laugh at the snow... they're doing their best.) Don't be surprised if you start hearing voices in your head, either... they're your chums, who have different personalities. (You'll hate the slightly sarcastic one immediately, but try to resist sending him to his death... he has his uses.) One of the voices sounds like Shep from *ER*, and another like Christopher Walken. But it's not them. I checked.

Basically, *Terra Nova* is a good, fast-moving and atmospheric game – which is probably no surprise as it comes from the people who brought you *System Shock*. My only problem is that, despite the supposed pan-galactic nature of the thing, it's very American – the actors, the accents, even the fact that you get a medal just for being crap enough to get shot (which is very American). Still, you can't have everything. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb (8Mb recommended)

Processor: 486DX/33 (DX2/66 recommended)

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Score

90

It's good, despite the less-than-stunning landscapes.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Virgin Interactive

Tel: 0171-368 2255

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

(Far left) The game is full of graphical effects that include night and day...

(Left) ...and some snazzy weather effects.

Star Trek: Deep Space 9 Harbinger



DEEP SPACE NINE WAS LAUNCHED in 1992 as a classy new arm of the *Star Trek* industry. Set in the familiar world of *ST: The Next Generation* – plasma conduits, tachyon emissions, Marina Sirtis's bazookas – *DS9* explored the grimy 'outback' of the Federation, where the feisty Bajoran race had overthrown its Cardassian oppressors and was forging a new life near a stable wormhole which – magic oh magic – led to the Gamma Quadrant, a zillion light years on the other side of the galaxy. StarFleet had taken over an abandoned spacestation called Trek Nor, and installed its own crew of desperadoes plus a few feisty locals, a changeling constable, and a few comedy aliens to round out the numbers.

Harbinger puts you in the jumpsuit of StarFleet envoy Bennig who, on returning from a diplomatic mission in the Gamma quadrant, is set upon by a bunch of lethal probes and emergency crash-docks into DS9. Coming to, on a more or less deserted spacestation, you find yourself joining a skeleton crew – regulars Sisko, Kira, Dax, Odo, and Quark – and stuck in the middle of some intrigue, a bit of phaser action, and some weird goings-on at DS9 HQ.

It's looking good, Vern

The format of *Harbinger* you've seen before and will probably see again. In what is becoming the blueprint for all 3D environment 'em ups, you get beautifully rendered flick-screen locations (confusingly pasted together from weird camera angles), beautifully

(Above) Here you can decide whether or not you're up to Captain status... answers on a postcard please as to what the 'bored out of my skull' bit refers to...

It had to happen. After the success of *A Final Unity*, another *Star Trek* spin-off based on a *Star Trek* spin-off was almost inevitable. TrekMaster™ David McCandless warps off to dream about 'feisty Bajorans'...



The cast

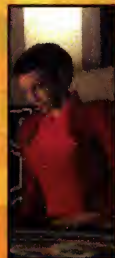
Captain Sisko

The first black StarFleet officer to man a *Star Trek* series, Captain Sisko (played by Avery Brooks of crap '70s cop show *Hunter*) is a tough, goatie-bearded leader, respected by his fellow crew members but frowned upon by Picardites due to his rather stuttered Shatner-like delivery and limited acting range. His wife was killed in *The Battle Of The Borg* at Wolf 359 and his son, Jake, is very tall.



Kira

By far the best of a good bunch, 'feisty Bajoran' Kira is second-in-command on *DS9* and is one tough cookie. A feisty ex-resistance fighter, she starts every sentence with "When we were fighting the Cardassians in the war..." and wears feisty tracksuits, and doesn't mince her words (which are also very feisty). She is particularly revered by Trekkers for her performance in the episode *Through The Looking Glass*, where she played a feisty, sexually ambiguous queen in a (sweat) leather catsuit. Verdict: damn feisty.



Lieutenant Dax

The token Barbie doll on the station played by Terry Farrell (of *Hellraiser* 'fame'). She's science officer and a Trill, which means she's about 600 years old and is host to a slug/baguette/todger (delete as appropriate) shaped symbiont. This supposedly endows her with Super-Wisdom™ and



Huge-O-Intelligence®, but the fact that she's lit to look really pouty and voluptuous in every scene doesn't do much to help the suspension of disbelief.

Odo

Shapeshifter Odo is 'constable' on the station and is played rather well by Rene Auberjonois (*Benson*, *Batman Forever* etc). His ability to morph into different objects or revert to his default 'goosey' shape has given him unrivalled abilities as security chief. The 'What is this "love" you talk about?' slant to his character gives him a certain Data/Spock air. Also, he doesn't eat, sleeps in a bucket, and is very very grumpy. Not a fun chap at parties.



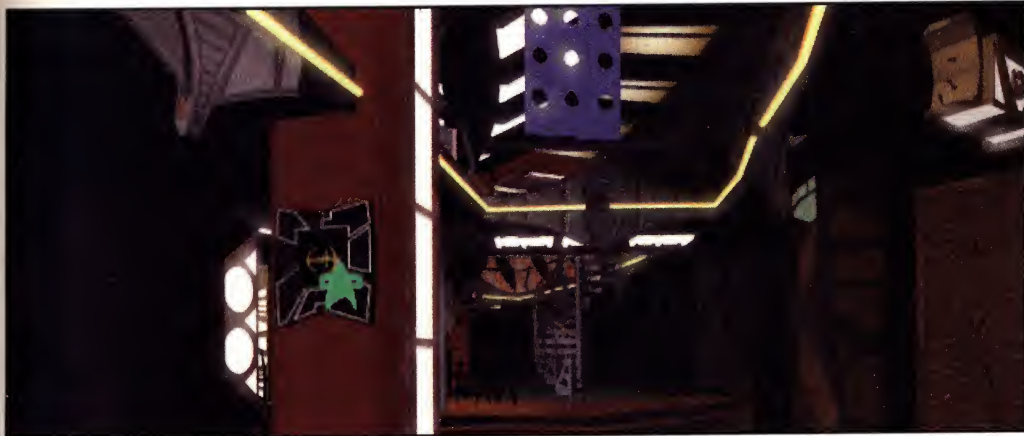
Quark

This conniving Ferengi (brilliantly portrayed by Armin Shimmerman, a Ferengi in many *TNG* episodes) owns the only bar on *DS9* and is a constant – yet amusing – thorn in the side for the crew, especially Odo. Their excellent love/hate relationship has raised many a giggle from comedy-starved Trekkies, and his insatiable greed and sycophancy will no doubt provide more of the same in *Harbinger*.



The other characters

Yeah, what about Chief O'Brien? And Doc Bashir? And Garak, and Gul Dukak, and Morn, and Nog, and Rom, and Jake Sisko, and Vedek Winn and... (*The list of incidental characters runs on for about six long, sad pages and has been cut to protect the writer's reputation as a well adjusted humanoid* – Ed.)



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse **Note:** Windows 95 required

(Above) Hmm... it looks like the StarFleet crew have decided it's time for some shore leave.

constructed 3D models of the characters which actually do resemble their real-life counterparts (bar the triangular shoulders and chronic rickets), beautifully pacey arcade sequences (basically the usual FMV sequences-mit-cursor stuff) – and beautifully impoverished and tedious gameplay.

The game is about as interactive as a spoon. You can chat to characters and move around the station, but all in a very 'you can choose this question and that reply' or 'move here, but not there' kind of way. The gameplay is very linear; the plotline forces you to perform hum-drum tasks in a very specific order, and you often find yourself trapped in a long and tedious exposition of facts. The difficulty level only controls the trickiness of the FMV action scenes, and doesn't allow customisation of the interactivity (à la *Final Unity*).

Environmentally-unfriendly

It's all a bit contrived really. The station has been evacuated by a pesky plasma storm, which accounts for the missing crew members and easy-to-render empty corridors. Then, the station is damaged in a probe attack, neatly knocking out most of the turbo lifts and doors, and restricting access of the station to pre-rendered bits. Even so, due to the poor interface, to wander around you have to rely on the map which aptly shows just how limited the playing area really is. Even the storyline skirts the gritty Dominion, Klingons, Jem Hadar TV series plots, to deal instead with the Sythians (who?) and a bunch of unknown ambassadorial crap. The subtlety of characterisation is lost too when your apparently unassuming diplomat suddenly "has a weapons proficiency rating of eight" and a reputation for kicking terrorist's butts.

There are some good bits, though. The station is faithfully recreated in 3D, albeit more garishly coloured than the original. The rendered character models are superb, looking, moving and even standing just like the actors do – clearly mega bucks of development invested there. The original voices of the cast add an essential authority, and all the cool

Score

52

Deep Cack Poo.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Viacom
Contact: <http://www.viacomnewmedia.com>

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

ambient sound effects blend joyously in the background. All in all, this is really just a 3D interactive game by numbers which, as a game or a *Trek* product, offers very little to entice even the most gnarled *DS9* addict such as myself. **Z**



Walkthrough

"Eight minutes before IPS overload," warns Sisko as me and Odo flail around the stricken run-about.



Apparently there's some "uncontained plasma in conduit B" so I have to rewire the safety mechanism. Cue overly-simple and boring puzzle. Match the chips on the left with the damaged circuit boards on the right. Difficult? For the producers of *HollyOaks* maybe.

After a cool trip *inside* a transport beam, I find myself on the bridge being eyeballed by a very aggressive-looking



Sisko. After some summary introductions, we compare my ship's logs with some archive footage and conclude that – scoop – I was attacked by probes. All this takes about 20 minutes.

Alarm klaxons sound as an armada of probes start to attack the station. Well,



wouldn't you know it? The plasma storm has disrupted auto-targeting so we have to resort to manual. What with? With the mouse, silly. A canned FMV sequence plays and I shoot loads of probes which explode while the camera pinwheels all over the shop.

Get out of the Operations room. Not as easy as it sounds. The tricky interface



foibles make simple forward, back and turn motions into a science. After ten minutes of seeing every flick-screen about six times, I finally realise I must talk to Sisko before I can leave.

I now find myself on the hopelessly deserted promenade (the central hub of *DS9*). Locate Quark's bar, where the slimy Ferengi is having a rather obvious naughty chat with an alien person. Chew the fat



for a while. Quark's hiding something (quelle surprise). An 'amusing' argument between him and the Dabo girl takes place. Can't face walking back through 17 rendered camera angles. Quit.

PICK 'N' MIX

Pick 'n' Mix counters are fairly unappetising affairs. The sweets are usually 20 times less tasty than they appear (especially those jelly snakes), and even the delicious ones carry a faint hint of 'snotty toddler's hand', since they've been mauled and dribbled on by every mewling brat in town through the course of the day. And then at the checkout you inevitably discover that your selection weighs a staggering 15 kilos and costs more per gram than any illegal substance you care to mention. Well, this month's PC game Pick 'n' Mix is even worse. Picture a mouldy, furry, putrefying range of 'sweets' nestling in a threadbare display cabinet at the bottom of a swamp. Read on only if you just lo-o-ve to read a good bit of slugging...

CONGO: DESCENT INTO ZINJ

Publisher: Viacom
Contact: <http://www.viacomnewmedia.com>
Price: £39.99
Note: 8Mb RAM and Windows 3.1 or above required

SCORE: 55%

Unfortunately, *Congo* is one of those games that's in a bit of a bad position before it's even started. You see, the movie wasn't exactly what anyone would call awe-inspiring. Some would even go so far as to say that it was crap. It had some cool monkeys or apes or gorillas or whatever you want to call them in it, but it was decidedly dodgy.

The basic idea is that you head off into the Congo and hunt down some diamonds, at the same time investigating what has happened to a bunch of co-workers who went to this particular area of the jungle previously. It all looks jolly nice, and all the svga-rendered visuals are all pretty fab – if I had to draw comparisons with other games I suppose the closest things are some of Cyro's adventure titles, such as *Dragon Lore* and *Lost Eden*. The only problem is that *Congo* isn't really as good. It's by no means bad – it just ain't good either.

CYRIL CYBERPUNK

Publisher: CDV
Tel: 01483 728397
Price: £TBC
Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 33%

The first vomit-scented burp from this month's diseased stomachful of Z-grade platform games. Cyril Cyberpunk is a loathsome little geeky kid who rides a hoverboard and wears shades (see, I told you he was loathsome, don't you just hate him already?). An eight year old girl could deck him. Anyway, the fate of humanity lies in his hands as he battles to overcome an invading horde of



(Above) *Cyril Cyberpunk*: one of those kids you used to pick on at school.

mutant teddy bears by jumping up and down and shooting things. The levels are laid out rather like the 'Industrial Zone' bits of *Sonic The Hedgehog* – except that it's about a zillion times less fun. This sort of thing wouldn't really pass muster on Sega's Mega Drive, let alone the PC. A three year old child might gain some amusement playing with it for a while, but pretty soon they'd want to graduate to something on a higher intellectual plane. Such as dribbling.

IRONBLOOD

Publisher: Microforum
Contact: <http://www.microforum.com>
Price: £29.99
Note: 1.5Mb XMS memory, double-speed CD drive, DOS 5.0 or Windows 95 required

SCORE: 35%

Joy of joys, it's another sub-standard release from a company whose name is getting all too familiar here in Pick 'n' Mix land – yup, Microforum. *Ironblood*

is a platform game which allegedly "gives the user a lasting impression of what it feels like to be a combat robot". Beginning with a deeply uninspiring first level, the game takes you deeper and deeper into the realms of tedium with each subsequent stage, until you are either snoring loudly enough to get the normally placid neighbours banging on the walls, or you eventually begin to question the sanity of any god who would allow his children to invent such boring things to play with.



(Right) *Ironblood*: frankly my dear, I don't give a Gundam.



PINBALL 3D-VCR

Publisher: 21st Century

Tel: 01235 851852

Price: £29.99

Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 58%

Yet another bloody pinball game. Soon the PC's going to have more 'silver ball' sims than there are people in China. This one (from 21st Century, who at least make their pinball games playable) features an unusual – and bewildering – twist, alluded to in the clumsy title. Not only can you choose to play any of the four featured tables in a '3D' view (as opposed to the top-down 2D view in which you can actually see where the ball is), you can even record your games for posterity – at the end of each one, up pops an attractive little menu laid out like a rack of videotapes, inviting

you to label, then file, your latest little epic. How useful. You can play them back later to your friends – assuming, of course, that they don't stove your head in with a carjack after the first eight seconds. Pointless, pointless, pointless.

SHAKII THE WOLF

Manufacturer: Microforum

Contact: <http://www.microforum.com>

Price: £TBC

Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 34%

Sonic The Hedgehog starring a wolf, anyone? Didn't think so. *Shakii The Wolf* is the third sub-standard platform game in this month's selection. Judging by the Anime-style intros and the ludicrously incomprehensible storyline – which involves a magical land called 'Shake', a Lion Warrior bloke, some giants and some hi-jinks with a doppelganger – it's a pretty safe bet to assume the game code has originated from Japan. Unfortunately, it seems to have been written by the only Japanese programming team in existence who aren't capable of effortlessly churning out top-notch arcade titles, because it's full of jerky scrolling and dodgy collision detection, and because as far as gameplay goes it's about as much fun as breaking your jaw on a doorframe.

(Left) *Pinball 3D-VCR*: Wow. So pinball's entered the third dimension. Let's see 'em try the fourth.

SUPER STARDUST 96

Publisher: Gametek

Tel: 01753 553445

Price: £29.99

SCORE: 59%

This could almost be *Asteroids*, if we're being accurate here. *Super Stardust* is an okay-ish update of the perennial arcade favourite, replete with whizzy new graphics and an above-average trance techno soundtrack. It shares a couple of things in common with most of this month's other Pick 'n' Mixers, in that it looks like 1) an Amiga game, and 2) you can't help getting the impression that it's all been put together in someone's bedroom. Don't get me wrong – there's absolutely nothing wrong with that if the gameplay's up to it – but somehow it isn't. It's fun for about half an hour, but even that's pushing it. You want *Asteroids*? Get Microsoft *Arcade* instead and play the real McCoy.



(Right) *Super Stardust 96*: There's nothing 'super' about it.



HOW TO ASSESS YOUR WORMS REINFORCEMENTS DEMAND.

New research has shown that Team 17's Worms may need 2-3 times the average worm's daily recommended amount of reinforcements. Use the following equation to determine how many "extras" you may need to achieve a wormabolic state:

$$\text{gameplay} = MC^2$$

Directions:

As a dietary supplement, add 1 Worms Reinforcements CD Rom to your drive (depending on thickness of worm) and play until satisfactory loss of bodyweight occurs.

Caution:

Do not play until limb co-ordination becomes restricted.

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Nutrition Facts

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new options per pack - stads

Amount per portion

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Improvements to game engine.
New "Red Cross" health crates.



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Back 

Budget Games

(cut here for free badge!)

And verily didst the tribe known as the Squeaks approach the Lord on his private island hideaway and say unto him, "Giveth us thy bargains and thy two-for-a-penny megadeals, oh Master. And make it snappy, feckwit." For the squeaks were not just scant of coinage, but low on patience to boot. And the Lord looketh down upon them and sayeth unto them, "Rub some oil on my back, would you?"

A-GENT

Publisher: Gametek
Tel: 01753 553445
Price: £7.02

SCORE 2



An utterly knob adventure title that's gone straight to budget because there's no way it could live as a full-priced game. Shite is the word (as Los Bros Gibb once almost said).

MASTER OF MAGIC

Publisher: MicroProse
Tel: 01454 893893
Price: £16.99

SCORE 85



AKA *Civilization* with RPG characters. As in *Civilization*, you have to explore land, construct various buildings, establish and expand an empire. This time you fight with ye magicke instead of ye conventionalle weaponayrrie and fight other wizards instead of other civilisations. Make your selection from four types of wizardy characters with different spells according to whether they're into Earth, Wind, Fire or Water, or another top '70s band with humoursous headbands, voluminous

SABRE TEAM

Publisher: US Gold
Tel: 0121-625 3388
Price: £9.99

SCORE 60

Sabre Team is a strategy game similar to *Laser Squad* and *UFO* and those other turn-based combat jobbies that certain wearers of inexpensive waterproof nylon upper-body wear seem to love. It's the same old stuff (only not as 'good'): juggle your resources to get things to help you fight other things, balance the books, lock up the office, get the tube home, and finally go to bed exhausted beside your dowdy, unsatisfied wife. Die in your sleep.

NASCAR RACING

Publisher: Virgin
Tel: 0171-368 2255
Price: £12.99

SCORE 75

Take *IndyCar Racing*, add cars weighing about six hundred tons which handle like supertankers, and you get *NASCAR*



(Right) *NASCAR Racing*: It looks good and is enjoyable in places, but... well, that's about it really.

Racing. The fabbo graphics run smoothly in SVGA mode (erm... well, if you have a Sesquicentennium processor) and the cars crumple authentically. Watkins Glen's circuit is one of the most enjoyable in any racing game, but the eight other ones are just bloody glorified roundabouts differing only in degrees of banking on the bends - they're so dull you'll find yourself swiftly drifting into a trance-like state. Good news for meditative, consciousness-raising types; bad news for everyone else.



FLASHBACK

Publisher: Gold
Tel: 0121-625 3388
Price: £9.99

SCORE 80

Platform game featuring gorgeously animated sex god Conrad Hart, his gorgeous brown leather blouson jacket and his programmer's chic white trainers - and we laughed at this man's dress sense once. It's one step up from *Another World*, but the whole thing's less of a platform game with nightmarishly tricky puzzles, and more of a platform game with spectral foes and treacherous traps that's likely to do to your testicles what a Spanish chef does to a bull's. Varied locations - including a killing game show - and plenty of nice touches. The complicated controls really only work well with a gamepad.

RAPTOR

Publisher: US Gold
Tel: 0121-625 3388
Price: £9.99

SCORE 60

It's Apogee Shareware month. This one's just about worth spending a tenner on

and is a fun shoot 'em up, flying up-the-screen action, top-down viewed, good graphics(ish) sorta thing. Follow me? (We only write like this to drive the sub editor barmy.)

DUKE NUKEM 2

Publisher: US Gold
Contact: 0121-625 3388
Price: £9.99

SCORE 40

Apogee Shareware Alert II: Platform game that wasn't as good as the original, and nowhere near as much of a laugh as its 3D incarnation. But since nearly every-one with access to a PC has probably played some of it on a cover disk you'll know all about it already.

WHACKY WHEELS

Publisher: US Gold
Contact: 0121-625 3388
Price: £9.99

SCORE 15

Hmm... The score says it all really. Whacky Wheels is a viewed-from-behind arcade driving game that's sort of like Super Mario Kart, in the same way that The Upper Hand is sort of like Hancock's Half Hour. **Z**

Barg-o-rama

System Shock £11.99

Ultima Underworld in space: big, first-person perspective viewed adventure, with total freedom of movement, loads of weapons and hours of fun/fear.

Alone In The Dark Collection

£34.99

All three games for less than the price of the new release, which is virtually the same apart from the graphics. Bloody hard though.

Essential Collections: Flight £34.99

1942 Pacific Air War, Fleet Defender F14 and Wings Of Glory: three decent flight sims for the price of a pint.

Essential Collections: Business

£34.99

Transport Tycoon is Sim City 2000 for the transport industry, and Theme Park lets you make children sick. Excellent!

Essential Collections: Sport £34.99

PGA Tour 486 is a superb golf game. F1 Grand Prix is the original version of the outstanding racing game. FIFA Soccer is okay, too.

Space Hulk £11.99

Gripping strategic gameplay requiring a great tactical mind and a cool head.

Strike Commander £11.99

Refreshingly straightforward arcade-style flight sim with decent graphics and loads of longevity, thanks to the inclusion of the extra missions.

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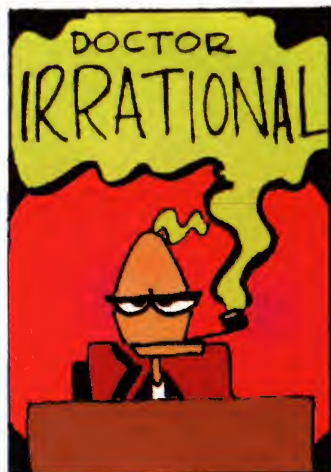
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Outstanding compilation: top chopper-sim Comanche: Armored Fist, its tank-game equivalent; and gripping sub sim Wolfpack.



Front



THE END

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OFFER CLOSES 31 JULY 1996

GAME - AND GET PLAYING!

Gravis UltraSound Reveal WAVExtreme

We all want realistic sound from our PCs, so to help us out **Dave Mathleson** takes a peek at two cards that use the latest wavetable technology...



(Right) The UltraSound Pro comes with a variety of extras, including CakeWalk Express.

A FEW YEARS ago, 16-bit sound cards were considered 'a bit flash'. These days, of course, most people have them in their PCs, and playing games without one is like owning a beat-up Ford Capri with raised wheels and smoked windows, and not bothering to fit a stereo loud enough to educate the entire neighbourhood in the ways of jungle.

The '16-bit-ness' (sampling resolution) defines the quality with which digital audio can be recorded and played back by the card. In gaming terms this means that sound effects are theoretically of the same quality as the music on a CD. Unfortunately, most music in PC games is played using the sound card's synthesiser chip, and it is here that the fine line between a thumping soundtrack and something very cheesy is defined.

If you have an older card, the chances are that it uses FM synthesis to make music. This method tries to emulate

real instruments by adding together simple waveforms, a technique favoured by keyboard manufacturers about 15 years ago with disastrous consequences for the music fans of the time.

There is a more effective means, and that's to make use of wavetable synthesis. This generates sounds based on samples of actual instruments, which are stored in hardware, providing much more realistic results. Wavetable cards are usually more expensive than FM ones, which is partly due to the extra chips that have to be incorporated into the card's design. However, AMD, best known for producing clones of Intel's processors, have developed a single chip that combines 16-bit digital audio and wavetable music. Known as InterWave, this new chip makes producing decent

sound cards a lot simpler, and therefore cheaper.

The two cards we're testing here both use InterWave, so you might expect them to be pretty much the same – but they differ quite greatly, hence this combined review.

Plug and Play in action

The WAVExtreme is a Plug and Play sound card aimed primarily at games players. The Plug and Play aspect of it means that, provided you have a compatible BIOS (basic input/output system: the chip on your PC's motherboard that controls all the different components), the card installs itself without any fiddling about with IRQs and the like.

Well, that's the theory, anyway. There have been lots of problems with Plug and Play cards, and it seems to be luck rather than judgement whether a particular card works properly or not. We tried installing the WAVExtreme on two different PCs, and to cut a rather long story short, it worked first time on one, but not on the other. However, even in the second case, it could still be set up using software, without the usual nightmare of changing jumper switches on the card itself.

Pro 32

As for compatibility, the WAVExtreme did a good job of pretending it was a SoundBlaster; the quality of the wavetable sounds it produced was excellent, delivering plenty of meat in all the right places. If music's your thing though, don't expect to have much control over the sounds that come out of it.

While the on-board instruments can be accessed from any MIDI sequencer, unlike the SoundBlaster AWE32 there's no facility for loading .wav files onto the card itself, and no on-board effects to tart things up – but Reveal plan to release a card with these improvements for an extra £20, so watch this space.

Along with its main rival the AWE32, the Gravis UltraSound was one of the first wavetable sound cards to reach the masses. In common with the Creative card, it provided skint musicians with plenty of flexibility, but it's suffered slightly in the games market with incompatibility problems.

A look at the 'readme' files that come with many titles reveal a few too many mentions for Gravis's comfort, and although these versions of the card could be got working, any extra hassle is likely to put a lot of people off.

Unlike the AWE32 we reviewed last month, the Plug and Play version of the UltraSound is a complete re-design and bears very little relation to earlier cards. As we've already mentioned, the UltraSound is based around AMD's InterWave chip. Unlike the WAVExtreme, though, it has that all-important sample loading ability, and the 'Pro' model we looked at comes with 512K of sample RAM already fitted (this can be upgraded to 8MB using standard 30-pin SIMMS).

Installation of the UltraSound was along the same lines as the WAVExtreme, although the additional features of the card required extra IRQ and DMA. Once more, compatibility is a bit of an issue; there are software drivers available that enable the UltraSound to emulate other cards, but it would have been preferable if this could have been taken care of in the actual hardware.

In terms of software, the UltraSound comes with a fairly impressive selection of extras. There are Internet utilities, game demos and CakeWalk Express, the budget version of the best Windows MIDI sequencer around.

The bottom line

The quality of the UltraSound's built-in sounds is, not surprisingly, the same as the WAVExtreme (ie very good), and the benefits to games players don't really need reiterating. On an expanded card (ie one with extra RAM added), though, some games can load extra instruments onto it, and although there aren't many games that support the card yet, the supplied demos provide a taster.

As to which card you should choose, if you're simply looking for a wavetable card to replace your old one and don't want anything fancy, the WAVExtreme takes some beating. On the other hand, if you do want something a bit more special, the UltraSound has lots to offer both the musician and the gamer in search of the best possible sound.

(Below) Depending on your needs, Reveal's WAVExtreme has a lot going for it.

Score

85

Although it's not quite as friendly as other cards, it's worth checking out if you're after the best.

Gravis UltraSound Pro

Price: £180 incl VAT **Release date:** Out now

Manufacturer: Leisuresoft

Tel: 01604 768711

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Score

90

A great budget wavetable card that'll banish all those FM blues.

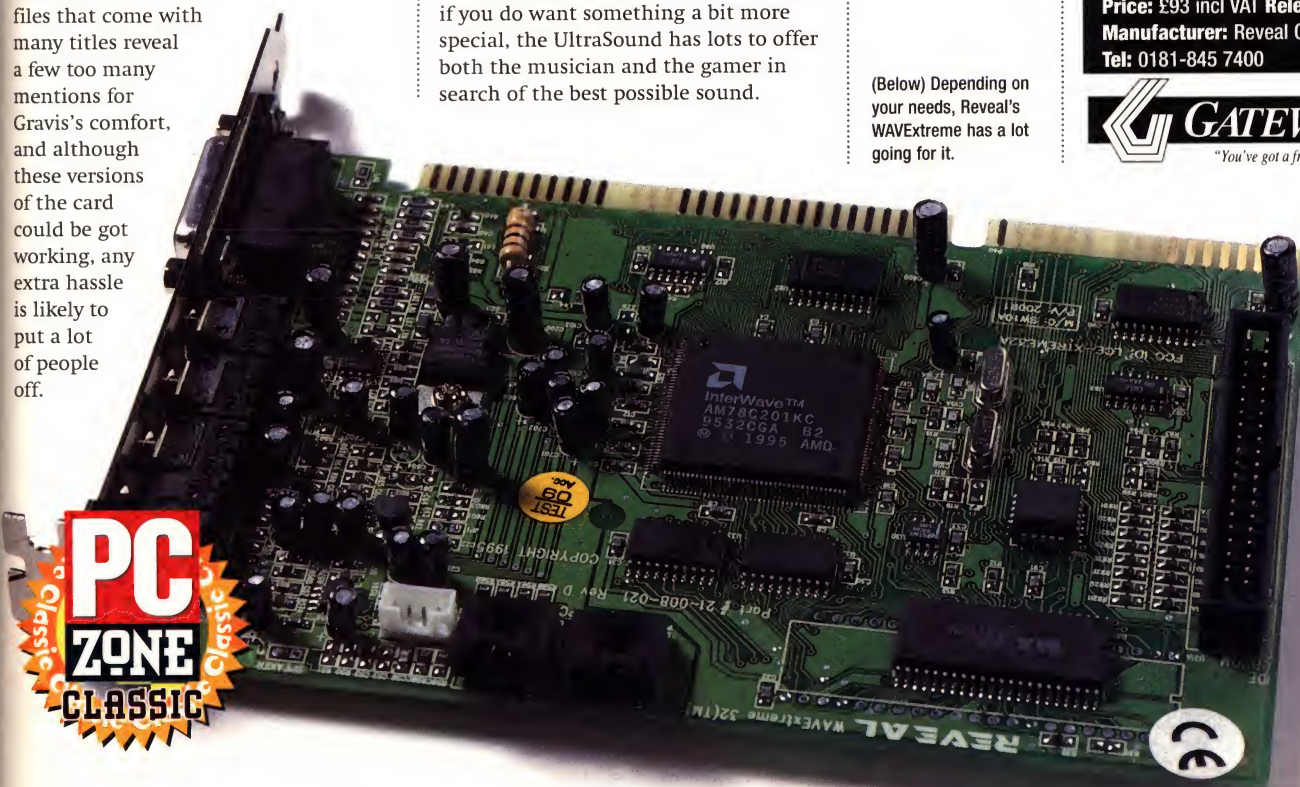
Reveal WAVExtreme 32

Price: £93 incl VAT **Release date:** Out now

Manufacturer: Reveal Computer Products

Tel: 0181-845 7400

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."



**PC
ZONE
CLASSIC**

Intel Pentium OverDrive 125MHz



If you're got a Pentium but it still isn't enough – tough. But wait... Dave Mathieson's got a little something for ya.

ONE OF THE SLIGHTLY DEPRESSING conclusions of our feature last month on speeding up your PC was that to make a significant difference, you need to fork out on new hardware. The single component that most distinguishes a pumping eater of frame rates from a very annoying PC is the CPU. Any 3D game needs to perform lots of dead clever calculations every second to make things appear smooth, and bearing in mind that an SVGA screen contains four times as many pixels as VGA, it's not surprising that slower PCs jerk-up in a big way.

Intel first offered OverDrive processors as an upgrade for 486SXs, the idea being that you bought your PC first, with the option to turn it into something faster when you could afford to. These days,

if you want to upgrade a 486, you can either fit a faster 486 CPU, or buy one of the Pentium OverDrives we reviewed way back in July. These are the only way to turn a 486 into a Pentium (short of getting a new motherboard), and while they definitely speed things up, they still don't really give the performance required for many newer games – and don't confuse them with what we're testing here, 'cos they're different.

There are still plenty of people out there who reckon that Pentiums are the dog's bollocks regardless, and the requirements printed on a number of games still say 'Pentium recommended', as if once you've got one your worries are over. Anyone who has tried playing something a bit taxing on a P75 (or even a P90) will tell a different story. Games developers often seem to write their products for the fastest CPUs around; this is largely because many of them are American, and PCs are a lot cheaper there. Since the fastest Pentiums run at 166MHz, your humble P75 has got a lot of catching up to do, which is where

Intel's new OverDrives come in.

The chip we're looking at here is designed to replace your P75, turning into a whopping P125. Installation is simply a matter of replacing the existing CPU with the OverDrive. When we put it to the test to see what difference it made, the P75 model increased the *Doom* frame rate from 26 to 33, which seemed a mite disappointing – but you're not really likely to spend this much money to improve what is already a pretty good frame rate. The real test comes with SVGA games, which exhibit extreme jerkiness on a P75. A 'before and after' test on *Duke Nukem 3D* running in 800x600 resolution proved a far better demonstration, with a marked difference between 'annoyingly jerky' and 'nice and playable'.

But before you buy one...

Before considering actually buying one of these chips you should check your graphics card, as the ones that come with a lot of PCs often have lousy SVGA performance; fitting an OverDrive chip in these circumstances would be rather a waste of money, as the crapness of the graphics card will soak up the extra effort being put in by the CPU anyway. The easiest way to test this is to turn some of the game's detail settings down (but keeping the resolution the same).



(Right) Try running *Duke Nukem* in SVGA on a slow CPU and *Duke Jerkem* comes out to play.



(Above) Intel's OverDrive 125MHz – it may not look very exciting, but it is. Honest.

If the game runs smoother, an OverDrive will speed things up when you turn them back up.

If your graphics card is okay but you still need more speed, you've got three options. You can buy a new PC (£1500), you can wait until there are more games available that use 3D accelerators and buy one (£300 plus months of waiting), or you can lash out on an OverDrive (£335). I know which one I'd choose. **Z**

Score

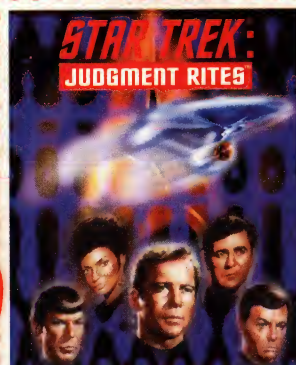
88

The only foolproof way to speed up your PC.

Price: £335 incl VAT
Release date: Out now
Manufacturer: Intel
Tel: 01793 403000

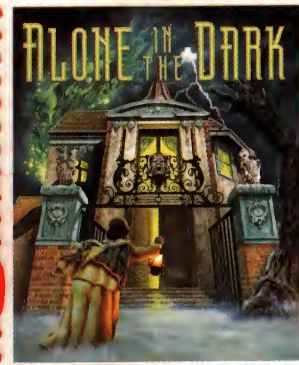
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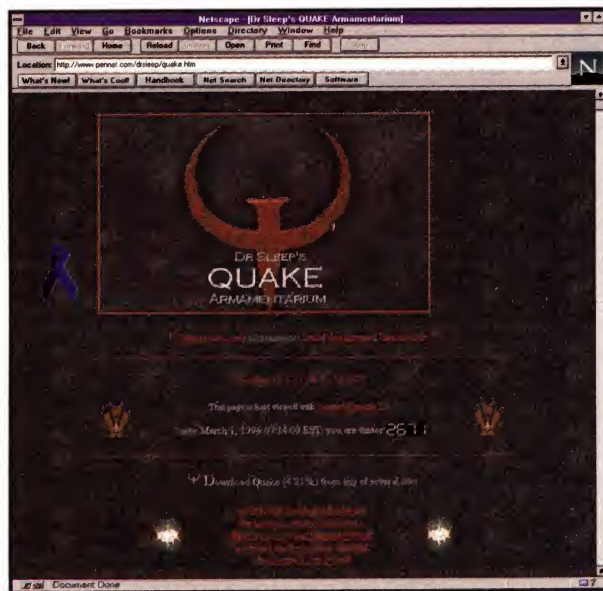
ON-LINE

QUAKE VS. NUKEM

The Dynamic Duo. The Gruesome Twosome. Les Enfants Terribles. Laurel And Hardy. Chalk And Cheese. Endless twin-based metaphors for what is shaping up to be the war of the century – *Quake vs Nukem*. **David McCandless** explores...

LATELY THE INTERNET – THAT MYSTERIOUS PILE OF CACK a mere £500 quarterly phone bill away from your modem – has been a-buzz. Not with the Ergonomics Of Breast Examination, The History Of Clogs Part II, The Reproductive Cycle Of The Trypanosoma Protozoa (to name a few of my favourite bookmarks). Nor, as you expect with the shilly-shallying over Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis, the Dayton Peace Accord, or the persistent prevarication of Sinn Fein. No, a greater worldwide concern has gripped the on-line community – is *Quake* better than *Duke Nukem*? (Or in the Net's vaguely scabrous language: does *Nukem* cack all over *Quake*?)

With demos of both banned from most magazine cover disks, you may wonder what the hell we're talking about. If you've downloaded the demos from a BBS or FTP site, and service providers who stock it, you'll know the ache of waiting download hours, desperate for their gigantic ZIP files to be squeezed onto your hard disk before the BT heavies rip your phone out of its socket. You'll also know what all the fuss is about.



(Right) <http://www.pennet.com/drsleap/quake.htm> – a very good looking site for feel-good *Quake* news and views.

QUAKE VS NUKEM

There are two sides in every war, and the *Quake*Heads and the *Nukemites* fracas is no exception. Conflict has broken out across Usenet newsgroups (mainly rec.misc.games.pc.quake), with an initial offensive from *Nukemites* slowly repelled by a swarm of *Quake*Heads. It's further complicated by 'freelance' parties, namely the *Lovers Of Marathon* (a piss-poor Macintosh *Doom* clone) and the *Doom Is Still King* brigade.

Duke Nukem 3D – the 'public beta' – was the first to be released on 31 January. It was warmly received and many people championed its 'added realism' and 'superiority' to *Doom*. The engine was enhanced, the graphics were arguably better and it had an eight-player network option. With nothing to base their defences on, the *Quake*Heads entered an annoying stage of 'denial tactics'.

Nukemite: *Quake's* gonna have to be way good to beat *Nukem*.
QuakeHead: No it isn't.
Nukemite: *Nukem's* gonna crap all over *Quake*.
QuakeHead: No it won't.
Nukemite: *Nukem* rocks. It's got modern day weaponry. *Quake's* all medieval and that.
QuakeHead: No it isn't.
Nukemite: *Nukem's* engine is ahead of anything iD are doing.
QuakeHead: No it isn't.
Nukemite: *Quake* sucks man. *Quake* sucks.
QuakeHead: No it doesn't.

On 26 February, a pre-alpha *Quake* Deathmatch test was released. Intended as a network bug-testing device, the three-level demo featured a playable version of the *Quake* engine, minus monsters and any vestige of a single-player element. After initial spasms of spooze as one hundred million people tried to download it, the first messages hit the newsgroups.

"It's got no monsters," a thousand people cleverly observed. "Yeah, and it's just like *Doom 3*," people moaned, whinged and grumbled. It doesn't have this. Where's that gone? Why isn't this in it? A few dissenting voices – mainly those who had enjoyed the multi-player as 'twas intended – objected to the objections. They were drowned in a tidal wave of 'anti-spooze'.

The *Nukemites* had a field day. Acknowledging that *Quake's* 3D engine and fully polygonal environment was 'pretty', they repetitively pointed out that *Nukem* was a more wholesome

(Right) Good looking *Nukem* sites are not unheard of. This one has some very handy fully complete maps of each level. (Gosh - Ed.)

experience with its explosions and prostitutes. Furthermore, the Snickers (or Marathon or whatever it's called these days) people pointed out their game was better than the other two put together (despite the fact it was plop), and the *Doom Appreciation Society* bewailed the absence of BFGs, Barons of Hell, and other such 2D baloney.

Strangely, as the debate hotted up and the *Quake* conference became a virtual 'info-tinderbox' of clanging viewpoints, the *Nukem* groups steadily dried in the same way that spooze does.

The war went on and people defected from the narrow-minded *Nukem* camp to the more 'Newham' free-thinking Quakers. Heavy flak still flew, but many more people were warming to the subtleties and coolness of *Quake*. And amazingly, after a mere month of release, the prehensile *Quake* test had stimulated amateur programmers to spawn the release of over 50 separate *Quake* utilities - from level and graphic editors, new maps, modem diallers, launchers, and other incomprehensible paraphernalia.

Which neatly brings us to the point of this month's *PC Zone* On-line. Yes, a round-up and detailed exposition of the two camps' file supplies. You'll find all these cool files on this month's cover disc, but we recommend you search for goodies yourself, using the links and addresses listed.

QUAKE FILES

You'll find these in *ONLINE\QUAKE*. Few of these files have front ends or any detailed instructions, so read the accompanying text files very carefully and back up any files first.

TEST1M2.ZIP (244,661 bytes). A replacement map with monsters, extra weapons, and extra ammo.

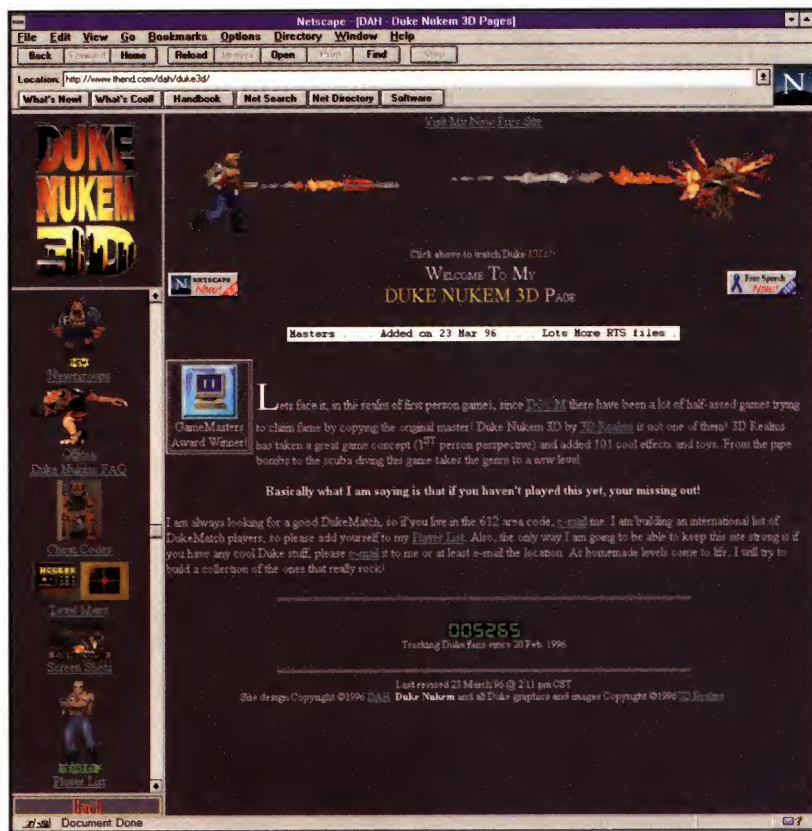
DEATH.ZIP (389,943 bytes). Another replacement map, this time for level 3, with loads of monsters, and piranha swimming in the water.

UVBE51A.ZIP (598,362 bytes) is UniVBE's VESA 2.0 driver for DOS. Basically it allows you to go beyond video mode 10 and into the heady realms of 11-20 (featuring the stunning 1280x1024 video mode). You'll need a fairly modern graphics card to reap the benefits. NB: this is not freeware - it will demand registration after 21 days.

QUBE.ZIP (21,078) by Sean Werkema is a "cheap *Quake* file editor", giving you a chance to view all map objects, list pictures, extract images, and extract the PAK file.

NEWMTEX.ZIP (88,080 bytes) by Ben Mazur. Someone has kindly designed some textures to fit the wireframe monsters, namely the soldier, the serpent, and the vomitus.

MAGELINK.ZIP (70,939 bytes) by Nathan Hartwell is an IPX file transfer program. No idea what it does, but everybody's raving about it. Use at your peril.



QUAKELNCH.ZIP (13,608) by Sly. This handy front end replaces those finicky command line options *Quake* hamfistedly offers. The launcher configures the map level, video mode, game speed, brightness, sounds, network play, as well as launching an external modem dialler, such as...

QD-B6.ZIP (48,523 bytes) by Simply Silly Software. Lacking in the *Quake* deathmatch test was direct support for modem play. Now, some clever little spuds have released a modem driver, allowing you to savour the joys of *Quake* deathmatch.

BW4PPP.ZIP (137,411 bytes). This is a DOS-based TCP/IP link up software set. Before your brain explodes, allow us to explain. It will - if you have a SLIP connection to your Internet provider - allow you to play *Quake* deathmatch over the Internet, simply by 'jacking into' one of a growing number of *Quake* servers. Gameplay is reported as being awful - you'll need a ping of 100ms or less - but if you're rich and have an ethernet connection, you may get away with it.

MDLV01.ZIP (68,298 bytes) by Brian Martin allows you to examine and edit the .MDL files in *Quake*, the format which describes the objects. To get it working you need to first decompress the main ID1.PAK file with UNPACK or QUBE (see above). The model files are in the PROGS directory. With MDLV01, you can view object textures, point mapping of the vertices, view the polygon mapping, siphon out textures, design your own, and then re-import them. NB: Don't forget to back up any MDL files you intend changing.



(Far left) *Duke Nukem*: it's got loads of nice levels, network play is tops and it's even got lap dancers. It's still a bit flat though, and it's still not out.

(Left) *Quake*: its monsters are made up of polygons and it's the first true 3D game ever. We wait with bated breath for the next instalment. So far, we're impressed. Very.



Doomwatch Infanta

We have a rather detumescent *DoomWatch* this month (hurrah – 90 per cent of *PC Zone's* readership).

Just enough space to tell you that *PC Zone*-reading Doomer, Tristan Hanlon (aka Woof), has spent lots of time yanking together some of the best deathmatch WADs under one synchronous WAD-shaped roof. On this month's cover CD (in ONLINE/WADS), you'll find a file called ANON.WAD containing 16 'excellente' levels, tested by the UberFragMeister himself (with a little help from a guy called Candyman). Whether a hardened deathmatcher, an aspiring FragMeister, or a sad person who plays LAN *Doom* at lunchtimes instead of going to the sandwich shop, you'll find ANON.WAD a refreshing diversion. Here's a tracklist:

Level	Name	Players	Notes	Author
1	STAR	2-4	Highly strategic and fun.	Woof
2		3-4	Nasty chase level with hidden BFG.	
3	CANDY	4	Horribly complex labyrinth. Tight corridors.	Candyman
4	STARS2	2-4	Excellent all-round combat level.	Woof
5	MAD	4	Stupidly weapon-laden but fun.	
6		2-4	Interesting frag-a-second WAD.	
7	WEIRD	2-4		
8		2-4		
9	SEATTLE	2-4	Excellent variation of <i>Doom 1</i> , level one.	Zebulon
10		4		
11	STARS4	2-4	Nice circular blast-o-rama.	Woof
12	PEPSI	3-4	Sprawling nightmare with new textures.	
13	CRAMPED	2-4		
14	SEMFINAL	2-4	Variation of <i>Doom 2</i> , level one. Very good.	Glordos
15		3-4	Simple deathfest with cunning BFG cage.	
16		3-4		
17		2-4	Very funny.	

To run these, use the follow command line: DOOM2 -FILE ANON.WAD -WARP x
Where 'x' is the level you want to play. Remember, these are deathmatch WADs. Don't expect too big a thrill from single-player adventures.

- « ROLLINS2.ZIP (104,755 bytes) by Jim Lowell is an example of MDIV01 in action. Some sad person has changed the player characters' texture into Henry Rollins, complete with tattoos.
QFAQ_V03.ZIP (7,284 bytes) by Tom Wheeley. Exhaustive guide to loads of *Quake* facts in text file format.

NUKEM FILES

You'll find these in the ONLINE/NUKEM directory on your cover CD. Make sure you back up the USER.CON, DEFS.CON and GAME.CON files. Most of these programs will change them in one way or another.

WINTX 4.2 (298,444 bytes) by Olivier Montanuy is the latest version of the popular *Doom* wall, floor, monster, and general graphic texture creator/extractor. It's been upgraded and enhanced to support *Nukem's* GRP files. You can view and export graphics and play the game's mellifluous sounds.

GOREV11.ZIP (13,670 bytes) by Skywalker. A little GAME.CON replacement which amplifies the amount of gore and giblets in the game. Not nice.

SNIPER.ZIP (8,791 bytes). New weapons for *Duke*! Don't get too excited, there are no new graphics or animations here. Included are the mega pipebomb (make sure you're a long way away from it when it goes off) and the semi-auto sniper pistol.

REC_E11.ZIP (9,736 bytes). A recording of *Nukem* level 1 showing all the secrets plus the "super secret". Wow. Gosh.

SENSE13B.ZIP (15,585 bytes) by Virtuoso. This is an on-the-fly mouse



(Below) *Duke Nukem* was supposed to sport an easy-to-use level designer – where is it?

(Far below) Will *Quake* prompt the same WAD fanaticism as *Doom*? Do bears shit in the woods?



Downloading addresses

You will need both the *Quake* Deathmatch Test and the *Duke Nukem* beta demo to use any of these files.

Unfortunately, due to licensing restrictions, you'll have to download them yourself, or copy them off a friend with a modem. Here's where you'll find them:

You're after:

Quake Deathmatch Test (QTEST1.ZIP 4,316,050 bytes)

Nukem Public Beta (DN3DS.EXE 5,435,405 bytes)

FTP sites

quake.best.com/pub/idsoftware
ftp.natural.com/pub/idsoftware
ftp.cdrom.com/pub/idgames/idstuff
usshood.starfleet.com/pub/idstuff
ftp.stomped.com/idstuff

Other sources

CIX – *Quake* conference (FILES directory)
CompuServe, ACTIONGAMES forum
Multiplay BBS – 0181-800 1266
Gamesnet BBS – 0171-460 0515

Incidentally

<http://doomgate.cs.buffalo.edu/games/quake/quaketalk.html>
<http://www.geocities.com/athens/1802/Quake-Mini-FAQ.html>
<http://www.theend.com/dah/duke3d/>

sensitivity switcher which calls the mouse driver directly to change the settings. You can achieve much more precise mouse sens settings with this beast. Only works with Microsoft mouse drivers v.9 and above.

NEWCON.ZIP (13,249 bytes). Here's a new trooper to make the game harder for you – and it's not just a modification of the weapon damage (apparently).

DUKEM!.ZIP (19,880) by Jay Holden. Rather spiff launcher program for *Nukem*.

GAME.CON (70,287). The original GAME.CON in case you trash the other one.

HACK.ZIP (20,178) by Jay Holden. This allows you to see and use the three 'hidden' weapons in *Duke Nukem*. Excellent.

DN3D11PT.ZIP (618,453 bytes) from 3D Realms. This is the 1.1 patch for *Nukem* which adds a host of new features, plus a



few bug fixes. Included are: a crosshair for aiming, looking up and down with the mouse, operate pipebombs through cameras, enhanced joystick support, less bad language, strafe-running, variable range for pipebombs, and a longer holoduke. Very cool.

RTSMaker.ZIP (18,432 bytes) by Sypher. *Duke Nukem* contains an amusing feature called Remote Ridicule whereby you embed sound files of yourself shouting: "You're crap," etc and then broadcast them to your opponent in *Dukematch*. This natty utility makes the construction of those files a lot easier. Z

If you're still in need of a few back issues then look no further. Each issue costs £5.95 (£7.95 outside the UK). This covers postage and packing and a small storage charge. Each back issue carries at least one cover disk crammed with games. Most of these will be playable demos or shareware and are listed below. Several back issues have the HD or CD option.

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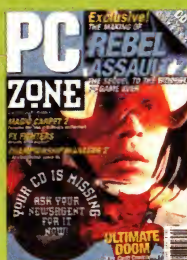
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Here's a listing of the most recent issues



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- CD version (AW29A/CD)
Playable demos of Hi-Octane; Micro Machines 2; Dr Drago's Madcap Chase; Darker; Lemmings 3D and more.



September 95

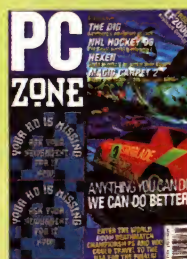
- HD version (AW30A)
Ultimate Doom
- CD version (AW30A/CD)
playable demos of The Duracell £50,000 Challenge; Virtual Golf; FX Fighters; Prisoner of Ice; Buried in Time; Vortex

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- HD version (AW31A)
Threat; Cathuga
- CD version (AW31A/CD)
Magic Carpet 2; Primal Rage; Prisoner of Ice; Airpower; Need for Speed; Terminal Velocity; Simtower; Picture Perfect Golf; Raven; Druid and more.



November 95

- HD version (AW32A)
Worms; The Machines
- CD version (AW32A/CD)
The Dig; This Means War!; Sim Isle; MechWarrior 2; Action Soccer; Capitalism; The Machines; and the latest Ocean Software demos.

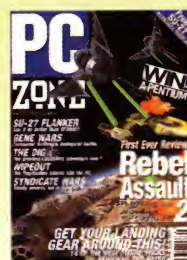
**HD version only available



December 95

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- CD version (AW33A/CD)
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**HD version only available



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- CD version (AW34A/CD)
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February 96

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Screamer; Tempest 2000
- CD version (AW35A/CD)
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March 96

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PC ZONE BACK ISSUES

CENSORED!

Gratuitous violence, blood and gore, rude words, these are the things great PC games are made of. Will this all change with the arrival of a rating system? Will software houses stop producing violent blood-fests in favour of noncey platform games with cuddly cute heroes to avoid having their games cut to shreds? Chris Anderson and Andy Hutchinson grab the bull by the horns and go in search of "the truth".

VIDEO GAMES HAVE ONLY BEEN around for about 20 years, but the industry that's grown up around them has gone through similar growing pains to those of the movie world. In the early days games were created by card-carrying anoraks in the bedrooms of bungalows in Cheam. Today the latest PC title is more likely to have been produced by a large team of professional coders, graphics artists, level designers, testers and musicians based in LA. Combine this with advances in technology and the end result is software that has never looked or sounded better. And there lies the problem.

But it's just good fun

Computer games have come on in leaps and bounds since the dreary days of the 286-based PC, where your average title resembled badly-designed Teletext pages. So when a programmer (there

weren't that many software houses around then) released a game called *Zombie Witch Sodomisers With Chainsaws*, you'd probably be treated to a screen full of asterisks and plus signs, while the noises it made would make the

average doorbell sound positively symphonic. There was simply no need for censorship because with such basic graphics they could hardly be classified as offensive.

With the advent of the 486-based PC, SVGA graphics, CD-ROM and 16/32-bit sound cards, came graphics of photographic quality – and as real footage could be sucked off the CD at impressive speeds, games became much more realistic. The first titles specifically designed for adults – such as *The 7th Guest* – proved enormously popular, while the kids happily made do with increasingly violent arcade adventures, *Doom* 'em ups and, of course, *Mortal Kombat*.

It's not quite censorship, but they're working on it

By 1994, censorship in video games had become the latest media football. The government was convinced that there was a problem and that the Video Recordings Act should be changed so that all software had to be rated – the system they had in mind would have cost software houses £1700 per title and official clearance could take three to six months. Obviously the larger software houses that release hundreds of games annually didn't want to end up paying hundreds of thousands of pounds each year and lose six precious months from their release schedules.

Fortunately for everyone a new rating system was devised whereby the publisher proposes an age rating and submits a form to the Video Standards Council, who then says "yes" or "no".

18

Motion sickness?



Full motion video has brought incredibly realistic scenes to computer games. The rape scene in *Phantasmagoria*, for example, caused quite a stir when the game first came out. With this in mind you could be forgiven for thinking that the offices of the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) are full to the brim with video games that contain 'offensive' full motion video scenes – but this is not the case. For a start, most games don't require a BBFC rating at all.

As Margaret Ford, Deputy Director of the BBFC puts it: "We only get involved if a game contains sexually explicit scenes, or scenes showing acts

of force against humans or animals, or scenes that could stimulate sexual activity or acts of force against humans or animals." Margaret sent us a list of games that have been put forward to them for classification since they first got involved in certifying video games, and, considering the number of titles released in the last two years, there are a surprisingly low amount of them on this list. Even more surprising is the fact that a lot of them don't contain any FMV scenes at all.

This certainly backs up ELSPA's claims that content is more important than realism, and shuts up the scaremongers in certain magazines who have been telling everyone that FMV in video games is an increasing cause for concern



(Right) Will PC gamers of the future be victims of horrifying video games, or victims of needless censorship?

CENSORED!

However, all this changes when the game includes elements of a sexual nature or violence towards humans or animals, because it then loses its exemption under the Video Recordings Act and has to be submitted to the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) who then decides on a rating – a process which takes about six weeks and costs nearly £2000. The BBFC also has the authority to prevent a game being released at all.

The games people play

Funnily enough, some software houses actually fight for a harsh rating. Gaylon Svanas is a producer at Origin, who are responsible for some of the most violent PC games of recent history. He revealed that *Crusader* was given a 'teen' rating in the States, much to Origin's surprise, on the basis that it didn't contain



any profanity. The company went back to the ratings board and convinced them to give it a 'mature' rating, partly because it would be difficult to market it correctly if the public were under the mistaken impression that it was a 'kid's' game.

Gaylon feels that it's in a software company's best interests to be truthful: "We don't want parents to come to us angry about the content of a game. For example, *Wing Commander III* included the odd 'shit' and 'asshole' and yet had a tame rating. Here at Origin

(Right) Chris Knight believes *Sim City* promotes wanton destruction. We don't.

(Left) Peter Molyneux: "What's the point in banning PC games when you can buy far worse things in any newsagent?"

(Below right) Steve Cheese from ELSPA sees no problem in publishers rating their own games.

we don't look on ratings as a censorship issue, but as a way of communicating the content of the game."

Peter Molyneux, MD of Bullfrog, takes a pragmatic approach to violence in video games. "You should always know that you're killing someone. PC games are played by the same audience who watch 18-rated films. You'll only drive it underground and it's nothing new anyway – it always has and always will be there. What's the point in banning it when you can buy far worse things in any newsagent?" All of which explains why killing 'people' in *Syndicate* feels so awful – the first time you torch a load of bystanders it's hard not to feel some sort of revulsion.



At Maxis, well-known producers of video games, they view the problem as a societal one. Maxis' Chris Knight pointed out that the *Sim* games weren't as tame as everyone thought, since "you can eliminate a whole neighbourhood, or put thousands out of work, with just a few sweeps of the bulldozer." He went on to say: "Violence is an everyday facet of nature, so we should understand and accept it, but we shouldn't glorify it or pretend that wanton use of it will make you the champion of the world."

False alarm

The current government has now accepted that video games are not the enormous problem they originally thought they were. The Home Office told us that there were no plans to change the law, even though most people in the industry think that the split Video Recording and BBFC system could do with tidying up. The Labour

Who shot the sheriff?

So how does the rating system work? Well, this is a bit of a tricky one. The first thing a software house has to do when they want a rating for their game is to fill in a form and send it to the VSC (Video Standards Council). This form will give a synopsis of the game in question and say what rating the publisher thinks it should have. The VSC look at the form and tell the publishers whether or not they agree with the rating. Incredible as it may seem, the VSC base their decision on what they see in the form, and on what they've read about the game in the news and previews sections in magazines – at no stage they do actually get to see the game they are rating.

So, the publishers are effectively rating their own games and, it would seem, sending a form off to the VSC for appearance's sake. So what's the point of the VSC getting involved at all? We put this question to Steve Cheese at ELSPA. He had this to say: "The VSC is a government department set up with the help of ELSPA (Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association) to control age classification in video games. The VSC are a recognised governmental body and so their input gives credibility to the voluntary system which is currently in place."

Hmmm... not quite the convincing explanation we were after, but it's the only one he's got. We also asked Steve how he sees ELSPA's role in the great scheme of things: "Our role is not to judge games, or censor them, or get involved in saying what rating they should have. We are not moral crusaders, we are simply interested in helping to set up a rating system which we think is fair and easily monitored. We think we have achieved this with the current system, as software houses won't abuse it by setting unfair ratings for their games – they know that if they do, some kind of independent organisation will have to be set up to take over from the current system. If this happens, publishers will experience long delays in getting their games on to the streets as they will have to wait until their products come back from a third party judging panel before they can get them into the shops."

To be fair, the voluntary rating system seems to be working just fine so far. Whether or not this will continue to be the case as games with increasingly realistic graphics are released remains to be seen.



18

There's little doubt that the games you'll be playing over the next couple of years will be designed differently to those that appeared during the first half of this decade. Since there are very few maverick software houses or independent coders left, they'll avoid messing with the BBFC. But then this isn't a problem, so long as you, the punters, still get good games.

The question you have to ask yourself is whether or not the likes of *Doom* or *Syndicate* would ever have seen the light of day under a more rigorous rating system. While the American software companies are quite happy to create games specifically for adults, safe in the knowledge that there's a large market out there, the smaller outfits will have to travel a more family-flavoured route. So even those programs that do receive an 18 certificate are likely to be big-budget titles, produced by large, predominantly American, software houses; for example, *Phantasmagoria* has sold millions of copies, despite being little more than a schlock horror movie. Sierra called it an 'interactive movie'. We called it a pile of shite. The problem is, to a large extent it doesn't really matter what we say: as long as software houses know there's a market for this kind of rubbish, they'll continue to produce it. In fact, even as we write this, Sierra are working on a sequel to *Phantasmagoria*. (Yes folks, they're threatening to put us through the whole awful experience all over again.)

The upshot of all this is, ten years from now you could be playing sanitised, wholesome games with all the fun bits surgically removed. You might be glad about this. You might even argue that given the (insert bullshit phrase, such as desensitising) effect that violent games have on kids, it's probably a good thing too. Here at *PC Zone* we figure that a world without *Doom* or *Syndicate* wouldn't be a terribly nice place to live in. In fact, if it wasn't for *Doom* most of us would have turned into gun-toting psychopaths with a death wish, roaming the streets of London in search of victims. Now *there's* an idea for a game.

There are many reasons why a game can end up with a '15' or '18'-only sticker on the front of its box. Sexual scenes, such as those in *Voyeur*, will obviously be considered offensive, photo-realistic horror scenes, such as those seen in *The 7th Guest* or *Phantasmagoria* can raise a few eyebrows, but most of the time a game gets classified as an adult-only treat because players spend their whole time killing everything in sight and walking around a blood-soaked playing area. Here are some of the main offenders.



18 **PHANTASMAGORIA** Crap game alert! *Phantasmagoria* was given an 18 rating by the BBFC – maybe it was considered to be so crap that only adults would be able to stomach the utter awfulness of it. Er, and because it has a dodgy rape scene and lots of gore in it.



15 RIPPER Forgettable interactive horror movie 'starring' Christopher Walken. Controversial gory bits couldn't save it from oblivion.

15 THE 7TH GUEST This game proved to be enormously successful because it was designed specifically with adults in mind. This meant that it wasn't necessary for it to tip-toe around subjects such as death by steak knife.



18 **THE 11TH HOUR** Sequel to *The 7th Guest*. It's more gorier than the first game, hence the higher rating, though unfortunately the gameplay is exactly the same.

15 **WING COMMANDER IV** Those nice people at Origin thought famous actors saying “shit” to each other might offend some people, so they stuck a 15 sticker on the box.



15 DOOM 2 It's gory, enormously violent and phenomenally successful. *Doom 2* was one of the first major league games to be awarded a 15 certificate. The rating hasn't harmed sales though.



15 SYNDICATE If the future really turns out as Peter Molyneux imagined it in *Syndicate*, then drive-by shootings will be a growth industry.

15 **GABRIEL KNIGHT: THE BEAST WITHIN** Probably the most tame of the interactive movies on offer here. Occasional use of mild swear words, some mildly gory werewolf-type scenes at the end, but apart from that, nothing too shocking. Top game though.



15 MORTAL KOMBAT SERIES This started the controversy. People biffing each other, poking each other in the eye, and shouting “aaargh” a lot. Disgraceful behaviour that justifiably got the game a 15 rating.



Your caring sharing Zone is again ready to answer all your gaming queries. Ring our friendly TruePlayer Tips service on Wednesday afternoons, or write to our very own (well, no one else wants him) crotchety, opinionated Boggit. When the old bastard was circumcised, we reckon they binned the best bit. Here he is, answers at the ready...



TROUBLESHOOTER

Write to PC Zone

If you have a query concerning a role-playing game or adventure, or you have a hot tip or a cheat to share, then write to:

The Boggit
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Because our tips line is so busy, and because the man who answers the phone is only a mere mortal, we need you to prove that you have actually bought the magazine and that you're not just a freeloading blagger. To do this, our tips geezer will ask you for a password before you request your tip. This month's password is... "Give me a tip and I'll give you my last Rolo".



Gabriel Knight: Sins Of The Father

I am stuck on day 9. Gabriel is in Africa investigating the large round mound. There is a stick that seems to fit in some holes in the wall, but inserting it appears to have no effect. There are also some stone tablets that fit into slots in the wall, but again, sticking them in seems to have no effect. What do I do?

Duncan Mackay, Edinburgh

Sticking things into holes when you don't know what you're doing seems like a bloody foolish policy to me, and it's actually one of the mottoes I live by; all things considered, I think it's kept me out of trouble.

You should walk around the outer rooms of the mound and pick up the blue rod. Take the loose tiles from each room – you'll find that they are usually either on the inner wall or lying on the floor. You can tell the number of each tile by counting how many snakes are on it: note the tiles that are already fixed in order to determine the positions of the other ones. Replace the tiles so that they are in clock positions, from one to twelve.

Put the rod in the hole in the tile in room three. Now go clockwise to room seven. But make sure you avoid the guards! Now walk on to room five and save your game. Click on the right wall, towards the lower middle, then click on the door to get to room six. Once you get inside (avoiding the mummy), grab hold of a vine and swing to room seven. Wolfgang appears. Insert the blue rod in the hole in the doorway to the inner room.

Frankenstein

Having managed to break free of the evil doctor's dungeon, and bearded him in his laboratory, I am now wandering

around at a loose end. What comes next? I know there is a girl in the story and my lifestone crystal is ready for her, but where is she?

R B McTeran, Sunderland

Go outside, near to the exit doors to the courtyard. Save your game. Turn towards the castle and a thug will appear with a rifle; there will be another bruiser to your left. Head towards the castle doors and climb the left-hand stairs. Go forward, turn left, and then carry straight on through an open door which closes behind you. Turn right and face the mirror – move quickly because the bad guys will come soon to smash the door down. The girl will appear in the mirror, and all will be revealed. (Well, when I say all will be revealed, I don't mean she'll start to strip off. You won't see her reveal white silky flesh beneath shimmering satin underwear that slips smoothly down over her... Dribble, gulp, gasp... Oh my God, take me...)

Discworld

I am trying to get 'the special' from Big Sally. So far I've got the cornflour and the egg, but I still need to get the milk. Presumably I obtain this from the coconut on the tree at the edge of the world, but just how do I get the damn thing off the tree?

Paul Glandfield, Camberley

It looks like we've got a lot in common, as I prefer big girls as well – it plays merry hell with your back when you get older. You get the coconut by using the butterfly net which is found in the psychiatrist's office. Enter the door behind Dibbler and talk to the troll. Leave the room, then return. Once the troll has moved to another seat you can pick up the net – but you'll need to enter the office, leave and return before the net will appear.

Contrary to the rumours about me I had never been to a psychiatrist before playing this game. Frankly, I think that anyone who goes to see one needs his head examined.

Police Quest III

I recently bought a budget version of Police Quest III. I am having a spot of trouble deciding what to do on day 5 of the murder investigation.

Jamie Shields, Huddersfield

HEX	DECIMAL
09H	09
0AH	10
0FH	15
10H	16
20H	32
28H	40
32H	50
40H	64
63H	99
64H	100
C8H	200
FAH	250
FFH	255



Magic Carpet

To activate the cheat mode press <I> while the game is in progress to get a cursor next to the map of the world, then type <RATTY> and press <ENTER>.

Alt F1	Get all spells
Alt F2	Increase Manna
Alt F3	Destroy all other players
Alt F4	Bring down all castles
Alt F5	Burst other balloons
Alt F6	Heal
Alt F7	Kill everything!
Shift C	Restore current level

Worms

If you are a fan of slimy, slippery invertebrates, then I've got bad news for you - *Take That* have split up! Anyway, here are some useful cheats for *Worms*.

Type <BAABAA> at the main title screen and you'll always have the sheep, mini-gun and banana bomb (set to infinite on the weapon options screen). Typing <AABAAB> turns things off.

(Right) There is a huge rocket waiting to be discovered on the secret level of *Duke Nukem 3D*. Only the 'quick and the cunning' know the route through the sewers to the hidden entrance, but luckily one of them has shown the Boggit how to get there as well.

(Far right) In the final section of the sewer a map of level 4 shows the secret entrance to the launch facility level where yet more murder and instant death lies in wait for the unwary.



Duke Nukem 3D

In the five levels of the shareware version of *Duke Nukem 3D* there are many secrets to be found, including a whole hidden level. Here are just a few of the bits that you may have missed.

General secrets

Most trash cans hold secrets, but you'll need a weapon to blast open some of the larger plastic containers to get their contents. Anything which spouts water (broken toilet, broken hydrant) restores your hit points if you stand next to it and keep pressing the spacebar. You will also gain points for using the toilet.

Level 1

Outside, jump first onto the crate then onto the sloped part of the building, then leap inside a window. Go to the poster and hit the spacebar. Jump onto the movie projector and a wall opens.

Try to play the *Duke Nukem* game in the arcade as a panel will open nearby.

Jump on top of the bathroom stalls and go left.

Outside there is a billboard referring to O J Simpson which says "Innocent?" (you'll also find a television on Level 2 showing a white Ford Bronco - another O J Simpson reference).

Shoot the movie screen with an RPG.

When you use the cash register in the lobby a door will open at the top of the wall to your right. Stand below the door and hit the spacebar.

Stand next to the trash can and press the spacebar.

Level 2

In the bookstore, hit the spacebar when standing next to the bookshelf that you face when you enter.

Just before the elevator in the bookstore, turn right.

Blow off the sewer lid near the yellow key with an RPG to gain entrance.

Level 3

Stand before the church's altar and press the spacebar and get behind the cross by shooting out the stained glass. There's a dead *Doom* marine behind it.

Make sure you shoot the corpse that's hanging from the rafters. Do you happen to recognise him? Yup, he's the guy from *Rise Of The Triad*.

In the dark cell stand before the bed and press the spacebar.

Secret level

There is a secret sixth level called 'launch facility' with a massive rocket



ship standing primed and ready for lift-off. The entrance to this level is found in the final section of the sewer in level 4. As you float down the sewer use your rocket launcher to blast the left-hand side of the tunnel; you will then be able to uncover the secret entrance.

In this level there is a pool of slime which you can dive under to pick up items, and get through a grating.

In the room with the switch which opens the door to the launchpad is a wall. This can be opened when the spacebar is pressed.

Blake Stone v2.0 Blake Stone: Planet Strike

Activate the cheat mode by starting the game with the command

BSTONE.EXE POWERBALL

When the 'Jam' logo appears, press and hold the left <SHIFT>, then the right <SHIFT> key; there will be a sound to indicate when to stop pressing.

Backspace+E	Go to end of level
Backspace+G	God mode
Backspace+H	Wound yourself!
Backspace+I	Free items
Backspace+W	Warp to level

Type <JAM> and press <ENTER> at any point in *Blake Stone* to get full ammo and health.

Crusader - No Remorse

Instead of typing <CRUSADER> to start the game, warp to the cheat room with **CRUSADER -WARP 6 -EGG 250 -SKILL 4**

Substitute the number '6' with the number of the level you want to warp to. Substitute '4' for the skill level (eg 1 = Mama's Boy, 4 = No Remorse).

You will appear in a special room crammed with goodies. Grab what you want, then jump into the transporter.

At any point in the game, typing <JASSICA 16> (caps lock on) activates the cheat mode - you may have to try this a few times as it depends on the timing.

After death <CTRL/F10> will give you tons of credits and weapons.

During play, pressing <ALT/F10> will give you similar power-ups, but the freebies are different.

Secret level

There is a secret level at the end of level 2. After the prisoners are killed by the rotating guns, return to the cells and move into the one over on the far right. There is a teleporter here, hidden by the isometric view. Stepping inside the transporter takes you to the secret level.

Gabriel Knight 2: The Beast Within

SPOILED

Part One

"From ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties, and things that go bump in the night, may the good Lord preserve us." And thank the Lord we also have the PC Zone Troubleshooters to lead us through the first part of this engrossing adventure, and keep us safe when the moon is high in the sky. But don't worry – things are going to be all right... Nooowwooooo!

(Below) Oo-er! Grace is either going to sneeze, or the full moon is having a drastic effect on her...

Chapter 1

Open the duffel bag and pick up the letters, wallet, and dagger that are in it. Walk over to the desk; click on the newspaper to read it, and then click on it again in inventory to make out some words. Take the car keys from the hook next to the door.

Click on the note on the wall to read it. Read the letters in your inventory. Now write a letter to Grace using the stationary on the desk. Move outside then go right, to the edge of the forest. Click on the ground and pick up the hairs. Investigate the ground beside the water trough to find a paw print. Enter the barn, pick up the cement and use it to make a cast of the paw print. Return and get the cast.

Use the car keys on the car to drive to Thalkirchen. Look at the wolf sign. Click on the wolves, then grill the zoo worker for information. Go left and talk

to Klingmann to find out all he knows.

Return to Lochham farm. You must now use the tape controls to make up a new tape containing Klingmann's voice saying: "Thomas? Herr Doktor Klingmann here. Show our wolves to Mr Knight." To do this, select the tape labelled 'Klingmann', and then click on the 'Load A' button. Click on any blank tape, then click on the 'Load B' button. Click on the 'splice' button. Now select the words you need from the Klingmann speeches. Click on the 'transfer' button, then exit the tape recorder.

Return to the zoo. Search Klingmann's coat and you'll find a receipt. Select the Klingmann splice tape from your inventory and click it on the walkie-talkie which is laying on the desk. Go to the wolf pen and speak with Thomas. Click on the wolf's tag, then on the wolf to get a few hairs. Return to the farm. Examine Klingmann's receipt, then use





it on the mirror to get a new address. Take the car to Marienplatz. Move left, then enter the doorway on the left, and go into Ubergrau's office. Talk to him on every subject and then leave. Take the underground train to the University. Use both the wolf hair from the farm and the wolf hair from the zoo on the lab technician. Finally, give him the paw print cast; when you try to leave you'll be given an evidence report.

Return to Marienplatz, then go right. Move to the end of the street then turn

the corner onto Dienerstrasse. There is a post office on the right-hand side of the street. Use your letter to Grace on the post office door. Move up the street and find the Hunt Club number '54'. Tell the receptionist that you're an avid hunter. Go back to Ubergrau's office and ask him for the family papers. While Ubergrau is searching for the documents take the underground train to Prinzregentplatz and waste your time talking to a bad-tempered policeman. Return to Ubergrau's office and pick up

(Below) An interview with the German fuzz is not something that you'd normally welcome, but examine his wall-map and you'll find the visit was worthwhile.



Himself
Other Victims
The Killer
Downtown Killing
The Black Wolf
Exit

(Left) Our oriental heroine is no action girl – exploring museums and posting letters is about as exciting as it gets for Grace.

the papers, which should be ready for you. Walk again to the Hunt Club and claim that you are from a prominent German family. Use the family papers on Xavier.

Chapter 2

You are now happily in Grace's pants – yeah right, you wish!

Go to the main hall and discuss everything with Gerde. Leave the castle and find the Gasthof building. Talk to the barman. Leave and go to the two blue doors nearby. Click on the window on the blue door on the left and speak with Herr Habermas. Have a talk about it all then return to the castle bedroom. Examine the fireplace and pick up the screwdriver. Examine the hole on the fireplace wall. Use the screwdriver on the hole to open a secret panel inside the closet. Open the closet and then go through the secret passageway. Turn right, to enter Gerde's room. Pick up the key which is hanging just inside the door of the closet. Go back to Gabriel's bedroom and use the key on the locked door. Click on the middle stack of the books (the occult bookshelf) and read both the werewolf lore book and the letter to Ludwig.

Examine the far right shelves to get and read Christian Ritter's journal. Sit at the desk and use Professor Barclay's card on the phone. Examine the left column of books. Return to the Gasthof building and talk to the barman about Ludwig. Leave and talk to Herr Habermas about everything, and he will take you to the dungeon. Now examine the dungeon window. Click on the church in the window close-up. Exit to the courtyard and talk to Herr Habermas – again he will give you a note. Go to the church and give the note to the priest. Return to Herr Habermas and speak again. Go back to the castle library and use the typewriter to write a note to Gabriel. Use the package on Gerde to get an address for it. Go to the village post office (beside the blue doors) and ring the bell. Click the package on the postmistress to mail it, then use your purse to pay.

Chapter 3

Back in Gabriel's pants – boo!

Pick the newspaper up from the table and read it. Examine the business card



(Above) When you reach the castle you'll have to examine every single room to make sure you haven't missed anything.

to obtain Von Glower's address. Go to Ubergrau's office and pick up the parcel from Grace. Read Grace's letter. Talk to Ubergrau about everything. Leave and go to the cuckoo shop (to the right of the subway exit). Examine the woodpecker clock on the counter, then use your wallet to buy it. Head towards the Hunt Club and you'll see a police car. Try to talk to the man in the black suit, although he will ignore you. Use the evidence report on the TV crew.

Return to the Hunt Club, where you have to talk about everything to Xavier. Pass through the door on the left, then through the door on the right side of the room into the back hall. Place the clock under the plant in the hall, then return to Xavier's desk. When he leaves to investigate the knocking, examine the desk and the drawer to pick up the keys. Run back to the hall with the plant and unlock the door on the left side. Retrieve the clock, reset it and return it to the plant. Move once more to Xavier's desk and when he again disappears return the keys.

Go to the back hall, retrieve the clock, then open the unlocked door and enter. Examine the photos on the right of the screen and then the animal heads. Find

and read the little black book beside the candles. At this point Von Zell will arrive and throw you out. Talk to Von Zell, leaving the question concerning 'trophies' until last.

Leave the club and take the subway to Perlach, where you'll meet Von Glower. Question Von Glower. Look at the mask on the wall then leave. Take the subway to the police station and talk to Leber. Examine the map on the wall, and then the piece of paper on the corner of the map. Use your notebook on the note to get the telephone number. Return to the farm and use the telephone number on the phone. Use the notepaper on the table to write a letter to Grace.

Return to Ubergrau's office and talk about everything. Go to the post office and mail the letter to Grace. Enter the central room in the Hunt Club and talk to Preiss. Discuss as much as possible with the men at the bar until you are invited to the hunt. Talk to Von Zell and Klingmann and ask for a magazine. Use the tape recorder on the magazine to conceal it inside, then put it back.

Chapter 4

Hooray! We're back in Grace's pants.

Go to the library and examine the

shelves on the far left again. Go to the post office and read the letter you receive, then go next door and talk to the Smiths about everything. Enter the church and walk to the back to find the crypt. Click on Gerde twice. Return to the castle's secret passageway and take the middle exit to a garden. Pick some roses, return to the crypt in the church and 'use' the flowers on Gerde. You will now be given the car keys: use them on the car and drive to Neuschwanstein.

Enter the castle and tour every room. You must now click on everything that can be clicked on, and listen to every tape in the tour guide - make sure that you don't miss anything, especially the wolf paintings. Leave and drive to the Ludwig museum at Herrenheimsee. Talk to the woman at the counter about as much as possible. Not only must you view every object in this damned place but you must listen to Grace reading it as well to get all of the points you need; this is all extremely boring, but you must look and listen to the lot.

Return to Schloss Ritter and enter the library. Read Ludwig's biography in inventory, but be certain that you read *all* the pages. Use Barclay's card on the



telephone on the desk to call him. Use Dallmeier's number on the telephone to call him. Now exit the house and take the car up to Starnberger See.

Walk all the way left, then click on the railing. To make Dallmeier show up, ask him everything. Leave and take the car to the Wagner Museum at Bayureth. Again you must click on absolutely all you can in the museum. Before leaving talk to Georg. Return to Schloss Ritter and talk to Gerde. Go to the library and use the typewriter to write to Gabriel.

Use the Ludwig biography on the telephone to call the publisher, who will give you Chaphill's number. Use Chaphill's number on the telephone. Go to the Gasthof. Talk to the bartender, ask about the Smiths, then talk to the Smiths. Go next door and mail the letter. Go to the church and pick a flower from the nearby bushes. Drive back to Starnberger See, walk left and click on the railing to get a close-up of the water. Use the lily on the water and you'll get a scary vision...

Go back to Schloss Ritter, enter the castle and you will be told that a fax has arrived for you at the post office - go and collect it and read all the pages. Now travel over to the Wagner Museum and use the fax on Georg. **Z**

(Below) Throw a flower into the lake and your kindly gesture will bring you a bit of help from beyond the grave in the form of the ghost of nutty King Ludwig.

That's all we have room for - make sure you don't miss next month's PC Zone to find out if Gabriel finally manages to work his charm on the lovely Grace, or ends up as a werewolf's breakfast, in the final part of our neck-ripping yarn.



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BUYERS' GUIDE

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing **PC Zone Buyers Guide**, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

Issue 12 – March 1994

Campaign

(52) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action – too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.
Championship Manager '94
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's still the best (just).
Championship Manager Italia
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.

Combat Classics 2

(50) Empire – Flight Sim Compendium £34.99
Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second-rate duds.

Companions Of Xanth

(73) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Awful puns. Questionable humour. Very Monkey Island-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?

Cyber Race

(64) Cyberdreams – Racing £44.99
Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.

Fury Of The Furries

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99

A rivetting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.

Galriel Knight

(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.

Genesis

(83: Recommended) Mindscape – Strategy £34.99
A little bit of Populous, a little bit of Civilization.

Hand Of Fate

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99

You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.

Hairs To The Throne

(43) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
If I got this kind of quality from a PD game I'd be blinking well complain.

Indianapolis 500

(65) Hit Squad – Driving £14.99
A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.

Leisure Suit Larry 6

(75) Virgin Interactive – Adventure £35.99
The best Larry yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.

Linn Devil

(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics – Puzzle Game £39.99

An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.

Police Quest 4: Open Season

(78) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.

Premier Challenge

(78) Tai Chi – Sport £24.99
Design your own game. Boost this score.

Premier Manager 2

(65) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £34.99
It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.

Shadow Of Darkness

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99

A compelling storyline, but dull battle scenes.

The Incredible Toons

(82: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
Zany, silly and highly addictive.

Issue 13 – April 1994

Archon Ultra

(78) US Gold – Strategy £39.99
More beat 'em up than strategy.

Beneath A Steel Sky

(83: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £39.99

Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.

Conspiracy

(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99

Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.

D-Day

(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99
D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.

Demonsgate

(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.

Doom

(96: Classic) ID Software – Arcade £34.99
The best arcade game and also the best multi-player game ever. Doom is the best. Need we say more?

Hitrod Game

(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Ishar 2 with robots.

Hot Sound And Vision

(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99
An outstanding collection.

Interplay's 10 Year Anthology

(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.

Micro Machines

(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC, that is).

Mortal Kombat

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Not as good as the SNES Street Fighter II, but the best on the PC.

Nomad

(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.

Pinball Fantasies

(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball £37.95

The meanest machine of them all – a worthy successor to the original Pinball Dreams.

Reunion

(80: Recommended) Grand Slam – Strategy £TBA
Reunion has something for everyone.

Sim City 2000

(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99
Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure £49.99
A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.

Strike Commander (CD)

(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99

Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.

The Complete UMS

(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Both classics in their day, the two UMS games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.

The Lawnmower Man

(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99
Excellent presentation. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.

Winter Olympics

(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99
Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.

Wizard

(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

Issue 14 – May 1994

Air Transport Pilot (CD)

(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95
Well, it's not really our idea of fun, but it's a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.

Airlines

(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99
Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.

Arena: The Elder Scrolls

(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99

Disappointing really.

Award Winner Gold Edition

(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99
Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!

Battle Isle 2

(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99
Without a shadow of a doubt, this is the strategy game of the year.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)

(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
A stunning improvement on an already classic game.

Cannon Fodder

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.

CD-ROM Challenge Pack

(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99
Reasonably good compilation, but there are better ones around.

Championship Manager For Windows

(79) Domark – Sport £29.99
A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.

D/Generation

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99

Probably the best game that Windows users have ever played.

Excellent Games

(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99
Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including Populous 2, Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker, Car And Driver and Robocod.

Fantastic Dizzy

(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
What can we say? Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.

Galriel Knight (CD)

(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure Game £44.99

Brooding, atmospheric thriller.

In Extremis

(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99
You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!

Johnny Quest

(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99
Can basically be summed up in one word – dreadful.

Megarace

(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99
A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.

Merchant Prince

(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance, we reckon you'll be hooked.

Microcosm

(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.

NFL Pro League Football

(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99
As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.

Privateer: Righteous Fire

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99
Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.

Seawolf

(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99

A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.

Starlord

(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!

The Patrician (CD)

(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99
A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.

The Red Crystal

(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.

Unnecessary Roughness

(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99
Best described as 'all right'. It's as good as most American footy sims.

Issue 15 – June 1994

Bloodnet

(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.

Carriers At War II

(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
For die-hard strategy aficionados.

Darkseed

(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99
If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the Darkseed affair.

Diggers

(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99
Mind-numbingly tedious.

Disney Animation Studio

(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99
More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!

Dragonsphere

(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99
A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.

Evasive Action

(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99
Oh, so very close, but it's got more bugs than Watergate.

F1

(40) Domark – Sport £29.99
The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.

Fleet Defender

(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.

Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop

(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99
Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.

Hornet Naval Strike Fighter

(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Sim
As that well known saying goes: 'If you like Falcon 3, you'll just love Hornet.'

Myst

(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.

Pacific Strike

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99

Miles better than Strike Commander but requires a state-of-the-art ninja PC.

Pagan: Ultima VII

(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Without doubt a love/hate relationship for Ultima purists.

Ravenloft

(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99
A playable and accessible RPG.

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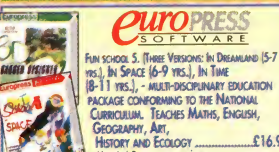
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(Left) *X-Wing*: groove on down to the old 'destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess' tune.

Red Hell

(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99
The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.

RedShift

(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00

Stunning program which will be hard to beat.

Sabre Team

(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99
This has all been done before, and done much better as well.

Shadowcaster

(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.

Spaceship Warlock

(70) Reactor/Ubisoft – Adventure £44.99
Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.

TFX

(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99
Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.

UFO Enemy Unknown

(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.

Washington DC Scenery

(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99

One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

Issue 16 – July 1994

Castles II

(65) Interplay – Strategy £49.95
Interplay usually releases excellent games – this isn't one of them.

Comanche (CD)

(90: Classic) Optima – Flight Sim £49.99
Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.

Companions Of Xanth (CD)

(84: Recommended) Accolade – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Great game on disk. Even better on CD.

Corridor 7

(55) Gametek – Arcade £19.99

Nothing new or exciting.

Detroit

(85: Recommended) Impressions – Strategy Game £39.99

An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.

Dragon's Lair

(67) Elite Systems – Adventure £39.99

An interactive cartoon that's more 'cartoon' than 'interactive'.

Eye Of The Storm

(40) Rebellion – Space/Strategy £39.99

Very futuristic, very *Elite* and very, very crap.

Great Naval Battles 2

(86: Recommended) US Gold – Simulation £45.99
SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.

Hand Of Fate (CD)

(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £49.99

Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.

Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition

(85: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99

A good golf game at an amazing price.

Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker

(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Sport £14.99

Dangerously addictive snooker sim.

Lucky's Casino Adventure

(60) Mirage – Card Game £44.99

Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.

Lure Of The Temptress

(55) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99

Old and fading.

Power Game 2 (CD)

(70) Activision – Simulation £29.99

Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.

Robinson's Requiem

(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing – RPG £39.99

Highly original, addictive 'survival sim' which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.

Sam And Max Hit The Road

(93: Classic) US Gold – Adventure £45.99
Brilliantly original, a highly humorous jaunt.

Sim City Classic

(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £16.99

Still a great game but check out *Sim City 2000* first.

Sim City Enhanced

(82: Recommended) Interplay – Strategy £49.99

Sim City's an excellent game but 50 quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.

Sleepwalker

(45) Hit Squad – Platform Game £9.99

Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.

Space Hulk

(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99

Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.

Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge

(80: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99

Good compilation, great value.

The Horde

(87: Recommended) US Gold – Strategy/Arcade Game £44.99

Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.

The Rock 'n' Roll Years – The '50s

(70) Supervision – General Interest £24.99

Handy for 50's music lovers or as a reference – but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.

The Settlers

(89: Recommended) Blue Byte – Strategy £39.99

A damn fine, engrossing game.

Theatre Of War

(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £12.99

Excellent strategy game and it looks cool, too.

UFO

(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

Our Chris's favourite, this is an incredibly addictive strategy game.

Wembley Rugby League

(66) Audiogenic – Sport £29.99

This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.

Wolfpack

(60) Optima – Strategy £29.99

Disappointingly average.

World Cup Challenge

(48) Winsport – Sport £29.95

Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

Issue 17 – August 1994

1942: Pacific Air War

(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99

Two great games – *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* – in one package. It's a winner!

AI Quadrim: The Genie's Curse

(40) US Gold/SSI – Role-Playing Game £35.99

The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.

Burntime

(43) Max Design – Strategy £39.99

Hey, it's just like being there.

Cool Spot

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Platform Game £29.99

Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!

Delta V

(64) Bethesda Softworks – Shoot 'Em Up £45.99

Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.

Dinosaur Detective Agency

(42) Alternative Software – Platform Game £16.99

Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.

Empire Soccer

(57) Empire – Sport £29.99

Let down by small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

Good To Firm

(50) New Era Software – Sport £29.99

Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.

International Tennis Open

(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media – Sport £44.99

Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

Jack Nicklaus (CD)

(78) Accolade – Sport £16.99

A perfectly serviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on. Wait for me while I put my golfing shoes on...

Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)

(0) Mindscape – General Interest £39.99

The most expensive beer mat in the world.

Overlord

(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Simulation £39.99

An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.

Pinball Dreams 2

(70) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball £19.99

Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye

(88: Recommended) Activision – Puzzle Game £29.99

Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.

Sherlock Holmes – The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel

(48) Electronic Arts – Adventure £49.99

Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

Simon The Sorcerer (CD)

(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £44.99

A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

Syndicate (CD)

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99

What a game. What a bargain.

Tactical Manager

(75) Black Legend – Sport £34.99

An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

Theme Park

(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99

A highly inventive 'business' sim that's fun, fun, fun. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog!

Walls Of Rome

(74) Digital Integration – Strategy £16.99

Good, if thin, fun.

World Cup USA '94

(78) US Gold – Sport £32.99

Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.

Zool 2

(82: Recommended) Millennium – Platform £34.99

As they say, if you liked Zool, you'll love this.

Issue 18 – September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)

(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99

Comic book-style adventure with excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.

D-Day

(40) Impressions – Wargame £39.99

A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a wargame without many redeeming features.

FIFA International Soccer

(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99

Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.

Harpoon II

(70) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99

Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always sloooooow.

Inherit The Earth – Quest For The Orb

(72) US Gold – Adventure £39.99

A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a 'sensible' game.

International Sensible Soccer

(78) Renegade – Sport £19.99

One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.

Little Devil (CD)

(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Adventure £34.99

Excellent, original and addictive.

Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes

(35) Megatech – Beat 'Em Up £39.99

Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.

On The Ball

(68) Ascon – Sport £34.99

Too many frills, not enough body.

Outpost

(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £49.99

A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.

Shadow Of The Comet (CD)

(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99

A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.

Soccer Kid

(30) Krisalis – Platform Game £29.99

If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.

Theatre Of Death

(35) Psynopsis – Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Below average imitation of an above-average game.

TIE Fighter

(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Space Sim £49.99

Sheer, undiluted quality. Go out and treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 – October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!

(90: Classic) SSI – Wargame £39.99

Never mind the 50-ton tanks – this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

Battle Bugs

(65) Dynamix – Strategy £TBA

A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).

Dark Legions

(85: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99

Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.

Heimdall 2

(45) Core – Adventure £39.99

Great game, shame you can't play it.

Hell Cab

(50) Time Warner – Adventure £49.99

It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.

IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack

(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £17.99

These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).

Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity

(50) Simarils – Strategy £39.99

Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

KGB

(65) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99

Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.

Kick Off 3

(55) Anco – Sport £29.99

Nice features, but gameplay isn't up to much.

Manchester United Premier League Champions

(60) Krisalis – Sport £29.99

Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.

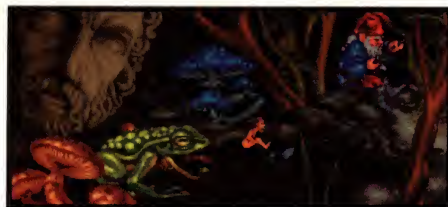
Planet Football

(68) Infogrames – Sport £39.99

The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.

Police Quest IV – Open Season

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99



(Left) *Simon The Sorcerer*: at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

Issue 20 – November 1994

Alien Legacy

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy Game £39.99

Space strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.

Chaos Engine

(80: Recommended) Renegade – Arcade £32.99

A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.

Colonization

(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.

Cybermania (CD)

(83: Recommended) Accolade – Arcade Game £39.99

Extremely competent *Road Rash* 3D0 rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.

Desert Strike

(78) Gremlin – Arcade £34.99

Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.

Doom II

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive – Arcade Game £49.99

The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and brand new monsties-wonies. Miss it at your peril.

Inferno (CD)

(88: Recommended) Ocean – Space/Sim £44.99

Eagerly awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.

KA-50 Hokum

(85: Recommended) Virgin – Simulation £39.99

Without a doubt the very best helicopter sim money can buy. Something for the propeller heads (yes, we know you're out there)...

NHL Hockey 95 (CD)

(91: Classic) EA – Sports/Arcade £34.99

A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

PGA 486 (CD)

(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sports £44.99

Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.

Pinball Dreams CD

(70) 21st Century – Arcade £39.99

Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why's it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.

System Shock

(95: Classic) EA/Origin – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter (at least until *System Shock II* comes out, that is).

Issue 21 – December 1994

Alone In The Dark 2 CD

(93: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99

A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and comes with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.

Dawn Patrol

(80: Recommended) Empire – Flight Sim £44.99

A gorgeous looking VGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book, apparently.

Dreamweb

(74) Empire – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shagging scene that has now become infamous.

Ecstasies

(93: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99

An utterly brilliant *Alone in the Dark*-like with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.

FIFA CD

(76) Electronic Arts – Sports £39.99

A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.

Little Big Adventure

(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Adventure Game £44.99

A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobsacking.

Magic Carpet

(96: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Bloody excellent shoot 'em up – looks brilliant, totally addictive. A must-have.

Project X

(76) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £19.99

A very competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em up.

Rise Of The Robots

(88: Recommended) Mirage – Beat 'Em Up £44.99

Possibly the best beat 'em up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.

Space Simulator

(75) Microsoft – Simulator £39.99

A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is just a little too ambitious for its own good.

Star Crusader

(60) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.

Transport Tycoon

(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.

Total Carnage

(74) ICE – Shoot 'Em Up £27.99

Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

Issue 22 – January 1995

Acas Of The Deep

(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra – Naval Sim £39.99

Graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

All New World Of Lemmings

(78) Digital Integration – Puzzle Game £39.99

If you like all the other *Lemmings* games, you'll like this one, too.

Armored Fist (CD)

(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novalogic – Simulation £44.99

Comanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what we mean.

Creature Shock

(78) Virgin – Adventure Game £49.99

An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

Cyberwar

(55) SCI – Arcade Adventure £49.99

It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.

Dark Sun II

(80: Recommended) Mindscape – RPG £44.99

Love it for its brains, not for its looks.

Discworld

(96: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure Game £49.99

Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

Front Page Sports Baseball

(85: Recommended) Sierra – Sport £44.99

It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

Klik 'n' Play

(88: Recommended) Europress – Game Designer for Windows £39.99

Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.

Novastorm

(40) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Repeat ad nauseam: 'Pretty graphics doth not a game make.'

Power Drive

(50) US Gold – Racing Game £39.99

Knock off 30 whole points for no two-player mode. Sod off *Power Drive*.

Quarantine

(80: Recommended) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

An excellent blast and it looks good, too.

Retribution

(45) Gremlin Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.

US Navy Fighters

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99

If it had a multi-player facility, we would've given it 100. But it hasn't, so we won't.

Warcraft

(75) Interplay – Strategy £39.99

Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 – February 1995

Alone In The Dark 3

(95: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99

The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone In The Dark* trilogy.

Cannon Fodder 2

(74) Virgin Interactive – Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Just more of the same, or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more 'fun with a gun'.

Commander Blood

(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure Game £44.99

It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.

Cyberia

(80: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure/Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

A contender for the 'Best-looking game of 1994' award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.

Dragon Lore

(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99

Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?

Hammer Of The Gods

(77) US Gold – Strategy £TBA

Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.

Kyrandia 3

(87: Recommended) Virgin – Adventure £44.99

Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!

Lion King

(71) Virgin – Platform Game £29.99

The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable-platform game. PC Zone good tip number one – just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.

NASCAR Racing

(84: Recommended) Virgin – Racing Sim £44.99

Papyrus follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round in circles.

Noctropolis

(79) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99

For a change EA goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.

Ultimate Body Blows

(78) Team 17 – Beat 'Em Up £29.99

An Amiga conversion from Team 17. But don't be put off by that – it's actually quite good.

Voyeur

(40) Interplay – Adventure £39.99

Not as pervy as you might think. Yes, there are suspenders and brassieres in it, but don't buy it hoping for nudity or naughtiness 'cos you won't find any (er well, not much, at least not enough to satisfy the male staff on PC Zone).

Wing Commander III

(62) Electronic Arts – Flight Simulation £59.99

Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress – a potentially interesting situation, if ever there was one.

Issue 24 – March 1995

Aladdin

(70) Virgin – Arcade £29.99

He leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin – who else?

Dark Forces

(95: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Action Adventure £54.99

The empire is finally *Doom*-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.

Doom Clones: Head To Head

(55) Merit – Action Adventure £39.99

We put Merit's *Dr Radiaki* up against Elite's *Virtuoso* and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller

(25) Gametek – Adventure £39.99

It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.

Kick Off 3: European Challenge

(70) Anco – Sport £29.99

The last *Kick Off* was an absolute nightmare. Has Anco finally got it together in Europe?

King's Quest VII

(93: Classic) Sierra – Adventure £44.99

The latest point-and-click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy, cutesy-wutesyness.

Knights Of Xentar

(10) Megatech – Adventure £49.99

A plentiful lack of beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!

Menzoberanzan

(68) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £TBA

Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary role-playing game.

Metaltch: Earthslogo

(87: Recommended) Sierra – Simulation £39.99

Go stomping mad in this spectacular *HERC*-fest. Just one thing though, why have extravagant *HERCs* that walk when the terrain is flat?

Reains Of Arkanla: Star Trail

(85: Recommended) US Gold – RPG £44.99

The sequel to the keenly received *Blade Of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...

SuperKarts

(82: Recommended) Virgin – Action £TBA

The most fun you can have with your bum an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.

TIE Fighter: Defender Of The Empire

(73) LucasArts – Space/Action £19.99

Two new missions and a new ship. What ever will they think of next?

Wings Of Glory

(78) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £TBA

Chocks away as Origin reach for the skies to do battle with the Hun, chaps with 'taches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 25 – April 1995

BC Racers

(62) Core Design – Racing Sim £34.99

Best described as a kind of *Chuck Rock* meets *Super Mario Kart*. Unfortunately, the clash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Oops.

Big Red Adventure

(70) Core Design – Adventure £39.99

This is the follow up to *Nippon Safes*... arrgh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though, *Big Red Adventure* looks like it could be quite good.

Blotforce

(95: Classic) Electronic Arts – Action Adventure £44.99

The first 'real' interactive movie? Or is it just another game that looks like *Alone In The Dark*?

Descent

(94: Classic) Interplay – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Could this be the game to finally knock *Doom* off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Interplay arrives at last.

Heretic

(78) id/Raven – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

'Doom-in-tights.' Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.

Iron Assault

(57) Virgin – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £34.99

A distinctly average 'big robot' game joins the ranks of other distinctly average 'big robot' games on the PC.

Legions

(65) Mindscape – Strategy Wargame £34.99

This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's intense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under *Windows*. Eek!

Lost Eden

(76) Virgin – Adventure £34.99

Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. It's a bit like *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore*.

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(Right) *IndyCar Racing*: great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

(Far right) *Sam & Max*: The clue's inside the cat. Rip its head off! (Sick, or what?)



Issue 26 - May 1995

Atari Action Pack

(50) Activision - VCS Atari Compilation £24.99
This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for Windows and all on one cd. So what's it like? Well, it's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!

Cyclones

(78) Mindscape - Adventure £44.99

Yet another *Doom* clone - but not a bad one by any means - from the team that brought us both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster*.

Football Glory

(60) Kompact - Sports £TBA

Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*?

A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory*.

Guilty

(58) Psygnosis - Adventure £39.99

Sequel-ola. *Guilty* is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.

Jungle Strike

(79) Gremlin - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike*. But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original. Not bad at all.

NBA Live

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts - Sport £44.99

EA Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game - the best of its type around.

Renegade

(75) SSI - Space Sim £44.99

SSI's *TIE Fighter/Wing Commander* wannabe in glorious VGA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.

Rise Of The Triad

(82: Classic) US Gold and PD Selections - Adventure £39.95

Some love it and some hate it... but of the *Doom*-alikes, this is one of the best.

Super Frog

(40) Team 17 - Platform £19.99

A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.

Tank Commander

(60) Domark - Simulation £39.99

A budget-style tank game at full price. If you've got more money than sense, you'll really love it!

Woodruff and the Schnibble of Azimuth

(75) Sierra - Adventure £39.99

A weird adventure game from Sierra. A wonderfully deceptive adventure with comic-book feel!

X-COM

(94: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

The first *X-COM* was absolutely brilliant. This sequel is even better still.

Issue 27 - June 1995

Blind Date

(25) Domark - Adventure £39.99

Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's 'interactive-try-to-get-laid-simulator'. What will the softies come up with next?

Full Throttle

(92: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin - Adventure £49.99

Hooray for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy biker stuff this time. Splendid.

Flight Of The Amazon Queen

(50) Warner Interactive - Adventure £39.99

This tries desperately to be a LucasArts adventure but fails quite miserably. Sorry, it's naff.

Hardball 4

(83: Recommended) Accolade/Warner - Arcade/Sports £39.99

Returning May's theme of 'sequels', Warner Interactive brings us the fourth *Hardball*. Surely Warner have to call it quits now?

High Seas Trader

(62) Impressions - Strategy/Simulation Game £39.99

Affectionately referred to as 'High Street Trader' in the *PC Zone* office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.

Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds

(80: Recommended) Bullfrog - Arcade/Strategy £19.99

A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.

Pyrotechnica

(69) Psygnosis - 3D Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

A very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.

Psycho Pinball

(78) Codemasters - Arcade £44.99

Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice tables. Some nice music. Sorted.

Slipstream 5000

(88: Recommended) Gremlin Interactive - Arcade/Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Slipstream is a three-dimensional-fabby-whizzo racing/shooting/speedy thing from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.

Star Trek: TNG - "A Final Unity"

(94: Classic) MicroProse - Adventure £49.99

Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the *Star Trek* name so far.

Super Streetfighter II Turbo

(90: Classic) Gametek - Beat 'Em Up £39.99

SSFII Turbo is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.

Ticonderoga

(78) Mindscape - Naval/Strategy £44.99

Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid cd bits.

Virtua Chess

(85: Recommended) Titus - Strategy £44.99

Snazzy 3D SVGA chess thingy from Titus, France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.

Warriors

(85: Recommended) Mindscape - Beat 'Em Up £39.99

What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

Issue 28 - July 1995

1830

(68) US Gold - Board Game £39.99

Set in the early years of American colonisation, a sort of *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk*. Strictly for those of transpotter persuasion.

Alex Dampier Pro Hockey

(66) Merit Software - Sports Sim £39.95

Ice hockey sim with *FIFA*-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95*.

Alien Breed: Tower Assault

(81) Team 17 - Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

The sequel to *Alien Breed*, but superior to the PC version of the original. Great graphics and frenzied, addictive shooty action.

Brett Hull Hockey '95

(73) Accolade/Warner - Sports Simulation £39.99

Top-down ice hockey game, which doesn't match the king of ice hockey sims, *NHL Hockey '95*, but betters *Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95*.

Chaos Control

(40) Philips/Infogrames - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Unbelievably terrible futuristic FMV shoot 'em up that was passable on CD-i, but should never have seen the light of day on PC.

Command & Conquer

(95: Classic) Virgin - Strategy Adventure Game £44.99

Dune 2 meets *Cannon Fodder* in this brilliant game of soldiers. It's without doubt one of the best of its genre around right now.

Daedalus Encounter

(58) Virgin - Adventure £44.95

Interactive movie game that fails to make the grade - and, for what it's worth, stars Tia Carrere, the babe from *Wayne's World*.

Dominus

(42) US Gold - Strategy Game £39.99

Fantasy battle game with good graphics and comprehensive interface but lacking that vital ingredient - gameplay.

Frontier: First Encounters

(78) Gametek - Space Strategy Simulation £39.99

Disappointing enhanced version of *Elite II*, which is also bugged to jiggery.

Jagged Alliance

(72) Mindscape - Strategy Game £39.99

Risk meets *Syndicate* in this strategy battle jaunt. It's not groundbreaking or particularly original but quite good fun all the same.

Loadstar

(35) BMG Interactive - Shoot 'Em Up £34.99

Dreadful FMV shoot 'em up not worth the paper its manual was printed on.

Machiavelli The Prince

(89) MicroProse - Strategy Game £44.99

Colonization-style sim packed with political intrigue, assassinations, plagues, pirates and a unique play by e-mail feature.

Man Utd: The Double

(71) Krisalis - Sports Sim £29.99

The best *Manchester United* game yet, but it's still not a patch on the excellent *Sensible Soccer* of this world.

Sim Tower

(70) Maxis - Strategy Game £39.99

Basically *Sim City* viewed from the side with the emphasis on virtue blocks, but not as addictive - and the presentation is dire.

Virtual Pool

(91: Classic) Interplay - Sports Sim £44.99

Superb gameplay and 3D graphics, complete with a multi-player network option. This is about as close to a real game of pool as you can possibly get.

Issue 29 - August 1995

Civil War

(83: Recommended) Empire - Strategy Game £44.99

The sequel to *Fields Of Glory*, and jolly nice it looks too.

FX Fighters

(93: Classic) Philips/GTE - Beat 'Em Up £39.99

The closest thing to *Virtua Fighter* on the PC, and by far the best beat 'em up you can buy. We love it!

Hi-Octane

(83: Recommended) Bullfrog/Electronic Arts - Racing Game £39.99

Bullfrog surprises everyone by releasing a racing game, and surprises everyone even more by not saying anything about it until it's nearly finished. Hmm.

Micro Machines 2

(92: Classic) Codemasters - Racing Game £44.99

A brilliant, simple and effective racing game with a rather nifty little track designer thrown in for good measure.

Orion Conspiracy

(36) Domark - Adventure Game £39.99

Domark unveils what has to be the worst-scripted computer game ever conceived.

Perfect General 2

(82: Recommended) Mirage Software - Strategy Wargame £44.99

Hex-tastic strategy game for those of you who really like your wargames intense.

Picture Perfect Golf

(30) Empire - Sports Sim £44.99

Pretty bloody naff. But hey, if you want to look at nice, digitised pictures of a golf course, this is well worth the dosh.

Prisoner Of Ice

(88: Recommended) Infogrames - Adventure £44.99

The second in the *Cthulhu* range - and it's a stonker of a point-and-click adventure.

Scottish Open Golf

(60) Core Design - Sports Sim £39.99

Core Design finally releases its 3D virtual golf thing. There are some okay bits and some pretty nob bits. Unfortunately, it's the nob bits that win through.

Silverload

(7) Millennium/Psygnosis - Adventure Game £39.99

Millennium and Psygnosis team up to produce an adventure which is truly... quite awful.

Striker 95

(62) Time Warner - Sports Sim £34.99

A football game that looks really fab and groovy, but doesn't quite cut it in the gameplay stakes.

Ultimate Doom

(90: Classic) GT Interactive - Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

The original *Doom* re-packaged with an extra episode. Is it another classic or just a colossal rip-off?

Vortex

(80: Recommended) Warner Interactive - Interactive Movie £39.99

It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. Arrghh!!!

Issue 30 - September 1995

Across the Rhine

(86: Recommended) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

If you're a propeller head you'll think it's the dog's gonads. If you're a bit of a thicky, you'll still like it, once you work your way through the laborious manual, that is.

Action Soccer

(50) UbiSoft - Football Sim £34.99

It had potential, but ultimately *Action Soccer* seems to have been relegated to the ranks of 'another crap footie game'.

Air Power

(84: Recommended) Mindscape - Flight Sim £44.99

Rowan teams up with Mindscape and chucks in all the best bits from its other flight sims, to make up a sort of fantasy strategy game, which is really pretty groovy.

AIN Networks

(80: Recommended) Infogrames - Business Sim £44.99

A business sim for people who love trains. (Yee gods! What next?)

Dungeon Master 2

(59) Interplay - Role Playing Game £44.99

It came out late and it wasn't worth the wait. Disappointingly out-dated and old-fashioned.

Last Dynasty

(45) Sierra - Space Combat Sim £44.99

A good *Windows*-based adventure game, which is completely ruined by crap combat sections.

Lords Of Midnight

(60) Domark - Adventure £44.99

Another very old game that's been given the sequel treatment - our reviewer said it was the biggest let-down since that leak in his inflatable Claire Rayner.

Sim Town

(81: Recommended) Maxis - Simulation £29.99

Fun and educational in equal measures. But even better, you can make people say rude things when they're pissed off.

Simon The Sorcerer 2

(84: Recommended) Adventure Soft (UK) - Adventure Game £44.99

Simon returns with DMs and long hair. Even though Chris Barrie hasn't done the voice this time, it's still a bloody good talkie adventure.

Space Quest 6

(70) Sierra - Adventure Game £44.99

Trite adventure completely devoid of humour. *Space Quest* fans will love it!

Terminal Velocity

(80: Recommended) US Gold - Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Very good 3D engine, wearing a pair of rather unoriginal, unaddictive 'game-play trousers'.

US Marine Fighters

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £19.99

Absolutely brilliant. The only thing that prevented us giving *US Marine Fighters* 100 per cent was the lack of a network facility.

Issue 31 - October 1995

EF2000

(97: Classic) Ocean/DID - Flight Sim £49.99

Something for everyone. The best balance between simulator and game, ever.

Fade To Black

(94: Classic) Electronic Arts - Arcade Adventure £44.99

A corking follow up to *Flashback*, with lots of spinnny-aroundy polygon bits, morphing monsties and big guns.

The Need For Speed

(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Racing £44.99

There's no need to buy a 3D now this has made it to the PC! This sits somewhere between *Screamers* and the forthcoming *FIGP2*. We love the splendid crashes!

Apache Longbow

(96: Classic) Digital Integration - Sim £39.99

The best helicopter sim around; although *Comanche* looks better, nothing comes close to matching the mixture of spot on handling, tactics, networking and atmosphere.



(Left) *Theme Park*: *Sim City* eat your heart out.

Issue 32 – November 1995

Buried in Time
(77) US Gold – Interactive Movie £44.99
The sequel to *The Journeyman Project* is a tad too lengthy; technically it's great but it's lacking the elements of truly enjoyable gameplay.

MechWarrior 2
(88: Recommended) Activision – Board Game £49.99
Mayhem! Go on a stomping frenzy encased in a massive armour-plated robot body. Good, hard-hitting fun with plenty of missions and a good difficulty curve.

Blown Away
(19) Instant Access – Interactive Movie £39.99
A pretty crap game of a pretty crap film.

Cyberbykes
(10) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £24.99
It came, it saw, it sucked. Ideal as a present for someone you don't like.

Lemmings 3D
(71) Psygnosis – Puzzle Game £39.99
We've seen it all before; all that's new is that it's now from a different angle. Yawn.

Player Manager 2
(45) Anco – Sport £34.99
Visually stunted, it's difficult to control the ball. What else? Oh, it's one to avoid.

Championship Manager 2
(92: Classic) Domark – Sport £44.99 (TBC)
Every other football management game is just that – a game – but this one actually becomes 'real life'.

Issue 33 – December 1995

AI Unsus Jr Racing
(60) Mindscape – Racing Game £29.99
It has all the features you'd expect from a racing game but ultimately it's fun for only a limited time.

Ascendancy
(93: Classic) Virgin – Strategy £39.99
More than just another space-based strategy game, this has got all the best bits of every god/strategy/warfare game available. A word of warning though, get stuck into this and you can say goodbye to your social life.

Battle Beast
(68) 7th Level – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
A cartoon beat 'em up with great animation, cut scenes and special effects – it looks great, but as for gameplay – forget it.

Burn/Cycle
(85: Recommended) Philips – Interactive Adventure £44.99
One of the best interactive adventures we've seen: good pacing, sharp plot and plenty of variety combine to make it outstanding.

Crime Patrol & Gamesun
(70) American Laser Games/Mirage – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
It won't take you long to exhaust the fun factor of *Crime Patrol*, but the gun is compatible with some other games and as a bundled package it's really not bad value.

Darker
(62) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Mediocre 3D blast 'em up with nice smooth polygons, lots to shoot at, but not much more.

Fatal Racing
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Interactive – Racing ETBC
Ridge Racer meets *Stunt Car Racer*... as long as you've got a Pentium, of course.

Magic Carpet 2
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
It sent our reviewer into a frenzy! The classic game is now even better, with new monsters and a new graphical style which includes scary night-time bits – totally addictive.

NHL Hockey 96
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
This uses Electronic Art's new 'Virtual Stadium' technology (used in *FIFA Soccer* to make it look so flash). One of the nicest-looking sports games we've reviewed for ages.

PGA Tour 96
(94: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
New and improved! Now includes two new Championship courses, you can play as or against 14 actual photo-realistic pros, there's a new picture-in-picture view... need we go on? The best golf game just got better.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure
(70) Activision – Platform £44.99
Conversion of the ancient Atari vcs platform game; nothing particularly special but still fairly addictive.

Primal Rage
(82: Recommended) Time Warner Interactive – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Jurassic Park for psychopaths – yep, dinosaurs a-plenty, good gameplay and graphics. Should appeal to *Mortal Kombat* or *Street Fighter* fans.

Allen Odyssey
(77) Philips – Space Adventure Game £44.99
A sort of cross between *Bioforge* and *Cyberia*, with the odd *Star Wars* reference thrown in; overall a pretty adventure which plods a bit.

Battle Isle 3: Shadow Of The Emperor
(93: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £45.99
The third and possibly final instalment of one of the most highly respected strategy games of all time. Certainly worth checking out if you like your strategy futuristic.

Comanche Vs Werewolf
(88: Recommended) Novalogic/US Gold – Helicopter Flight Sim £39.99
The sequel takes the original game and chucks in a completely new one as well for good measure. Maybe not the best helicopter flight sim around, but there's plenty to recommend it.

Crusader
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Blast 'Em Up £49.99
Action, adventure, people getting their heads blown off – bloody excellent.

Destruction Derby
(90: Classic) Sony Interactive – Racing Game £44.99
The PlayStation game where you can smash yourself and others to pieces comes to the pc... Plenty of network options, five different ways to play, superb graphics – need we say more?

FIFA '96
(84: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
If you already own last year's *FIFA* and you quite like it, it's worth buying this one. But if you want a simple and easy to control system look elsewhere.

Mortal Kombat 3
(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Beat 'Em Up £44.99
This is the best two-dimensional beat 'em up you'll find anywhere right now. Make damn sure you enjoy it while it lasts.

Navy Strike
(90: Classic) Empire Interactive – Naval Sim £44.99
Actually two games in one: a flight sim and a military command sim. In it you pilot a jet fighter in the future – you'll find that once the atmosphere kicks in you're hooked.

Phantasmagoria
(50) Sierra – Adventure £49.99
Without doubt a brave effort (spanning seven cds!) but sadly the interactive part is a bit ambitious. It looks good but that's about it.

Road Warrior
(61) Gametek – Driving Game £39.99
The sequel to *Quarantine* is unfortunately nothing to write home about, despite the good graphics.

Screamer
(89: Recommended) VIE – Driving Game £29.99
Stunning looking super speedy arcade racer with six different tracks, six different cars (manual or auto) and three different skill levels. Very arcadey indeed.

Worms
(84: Recommended) Ocean – Strategy £34.99
Worms is what you get if you cross *Lemmings* with *Cannon Fodder*. Four people can play at once, there's lots of weapons and features, and the levels are generated afresh each time you play – good fun.

Witchaven
(88: Recommended) US Gold – Arcade/Role-Playing Game £29.99
Witchaven is packed with lots of spells and potions to play with, the usual network/modern options, triggers and traps, impressive graphical effects – and if you're looking for gore you've found it. Sick, twisted and violent – we like it.

Issue 34 – January 1996

Actua Soccer
(92: Classic) Gremlin Interactive – Sport ETBC
Ranking alongside *Command & Conquer* as the office favourite at the moment, this is currently the best footie game on the pc thanks to excellent gameplay and a fantastic 3D polygonised pitch arrangement – sorry *FIFA* and *Sensi*, but you'll have to step aside.

Entomorph
(78) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £44.99
If you've already got a copy of *Ultima VII* and fancy something similar in style, *Entomorph* is worth a look. It's got a fairly engrossing storyline, although the presentation is somewhat lacklustre.

Fighter Duel
(65) Philips Media – Flight Sim £39.99
There's very little to say about this game as there's actually very little to it – don't expect it to keep you rivetted to the screen; even what little scenery there is is dull.

F1 Grand Prix Manager
(85: Recommended) MicroProse – Racing Game £44.99
One of the most imaginative management simulations around – certainly the best Grand Prix one available, but then it's the only one.

Frankenstein: Through The Eyes Of The Monster
(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
Starring Tim Curry, this is an excellent gothic adventure. The puzzles are challenging, the storyline is cleverly structured, the visuals are sumptuous, but sadly it's hampered by a dodgy interface which makes it difficult to navigate your way through the locations.

IndyCar 2
(90: Classic) Papyrus/Virgin – Racing £34.99
Polygontastic with absolutely glorious svga graphics. If you already own *IndyCar 1*, hold out for *F1GP2* instead. But if you don't, buy this one. Oh, but if we're really honest here, you ought to try to afford *F1GP2* as well.

Mortal Coil
(50) Vic Tokai/Virgin – Strategic Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Is this yet another *Doom* clone? It basically involves loads of shooting everything you see from a 3D perspective. A great idea on paper, but it's let down by poor graphics and voiceovers (even with the dubious talents of Dani Behr) – you may well prefer *Hexen*.

Pinball World
(77) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball £44.99
For some reason there seems to be more pinball and footie games coming out than you could possibly want, and although you've got a choice of table layouts (which you don't really need anyway) it doesn't really offer anything markedly different.

Pro Pinball: The Web
(90: Classic) Empire Interactive – Pinball £34.99
Don't discount this game because it only features one table as it's packed with goodies, you can see the table in its entirety or from six different viewpoints, it's realistic (you can nudge the table from either side as well as the bottom), and it's got an a totally stonking soundtrack as well.

Rebel Assault II
(90: Classic) LucasArts/VIE – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
If you can't see what all the fuss about *Star Wars* is about or you didn't like the original *Rebel Assault*, chances are you won't like this one. On the other hand, if you're a die-hard Empire/Rebel fan and spend your nights reenacting scenes between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, you'll love it. Of course solid action, 'real' live action bits, bloody gorgeous graphics and a corking storyline go some way to recommend it as well.

Sensible World Of Soccer
(60) Warner Interactive – Sport £39.99
We waited a long time for this one. It's got some management bits, some nice rendered cut-scenes and commentary, but it's still not a patch on *Actua Soccer*.

Stonekeep

(76) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99
It looks a bit dated (mainly because it's flick-screen), but in its favour it has a nice, easy to handle control method, a wide variety of levels to keep you interested and a very thoughtful experience system which allows your character(s) to become more skilled with their weapons the more they use them.

Su27 Flanker
(95: Classic) Mindscape – Flight Sim £44.99
Developed by Russian pilots, this is all about one of the scariest aircraft ever built. It's no lightweight 'hop in and pole around the sky' type product, but unfortunately it's let down by a lack of network or serial link multi-play facility. If you want a comparison it's better than *EF2000*, *MiG29* and *Tornado*.

The Dig
(87: Recommended) LucasArts/VIE – Adventure £44.99
Another offering touched by the hand of Spielberg. It's a proper adventure with a proper story, a cut above your usual sci-fi adventure stuff. And it's got great music.

THX
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive – Pinball ETBC
You get six tables to choose from (including *Monster*, *Funfair*, *Gangster*, *Sci-Fi*, *Myst* and *Majik*). It doesn't have the depth of the single table in *The Web*, but it's good all the same.

Williams Arcade Classics
(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Various £29.99
Worth buying for an arcade-perfect version of *Defender* alone, this '80s compilation also includes *Robotron 2084*, *StarGate Defender 2*, *Joust*, *Bubbles* and *Sinistar*. The graphics obviously aren't too hot given the age of the titles, but don't hold that against it.

WipeOut
(78) Sony Interactive – Racing £44.99
Winging its way directly from the PlayStation, this game of anti-gravity racing with floating cars seems to have lost something in the conversion; play it on anything other than a Pentium and you can kiss the pc version's smoothness and graphical details goodbye. Top marks for the brilliant soundtrack though.

Issue 35 – February 1996

Battleground Ardennes
(84: Recommended) Empire Interactive – Wargame £40 (TBC)
One for the serious strategy heads among you – hex-wargaming finally gets updated for the '90s. (NB: You'll need Windows 95 to play it.)

Beavis and Butt-head
(87: Recommended) Viacom New Media – Point-and-click Adventure £39.99
Fans of the gruesome twosome will love this game (but avoid it if you're not as it's unlikely to appeal). Plenty of puzzle solving and a hilarious script – it's like being in control of your very own *Beavis and Butt-head* episode.

Extreme Pinball
(65) Electronic Arts – Pinball Game £39.99
So what did our reviewer make of the 'proper' version of *Epic Pinball*? He had one word for it: "Aaaarrrggghh!" If you're after a top quality pinball game, buy *Pro Pinball: The Web* instead.

Quest For Fame
(80: Recommended) IBM – Music RPG £49.95
Air guitar rules! Pick up the plastic plectrum and join Aerosmith for a riff extravaganza as you try to make it from unknown musician to mega rock 'n' roll star – if you succeed you get to play with the band themselves!

Terminator: Future Shock
(85: Recommended) VIE – Strategic Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
The third title in the *Terminator* series, this has plenty of action and atmosphere, as well as one of the best 3D engines around.

The 11th Hour
(67) Trilobyte/VIE – Adventure/Puzzle Game ETBC
The sequel to *The 7th Guest* has been a long time coming – unfortunately it wasn't really worth the wait. It's not really that different either, apart from the addition of a 'treasure hunt' challenge. But then if you really, really like puzzles you may find that this game is pretty playable.

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(Right) *Alone in the Dark* 3: More Carnby, cobwebs, murder, mystery and mayhem.

(Far right) *Command & Conquer: A Case of Cannon Fodder* meets *Dune 2*.



The Hive

(78) Funsoft UK – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

A pre-rendered blastathon which is a bit like *Rebel Assault*, only without the good bits.

This Means War!

(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Strategy Wargame £44.99

Strategy, action and lots of futuristic stuff, a sort of *Command & Conquer* meets *Transport Tycoon*. It's slower *C&C*, but addictive once you've got to grips with all the options.

Virtua Fighter Remix

(89: Recommended) Sega/Datatronech – Beat 'Em Up £varies, bundled with Diamond Edge graphics card. Bloody stunning visuals with excellent detail on the players – but in the gameplay stakes it doesn't quite match up to *Mortal Kombat 3* or *StreetFighter II Turbo*.

Virtual Karts

(71) MicroProse – Arcade Racing Game £TBC. MicroProse have cleverly applied the word 'virtual' to the title – but don't ask why, 'cos the karts don't handle like karts and the hi-res graphics are jerk-tastic.

William Shatner's TekWar

(58) Capstone/US Gold – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

What a pity, as this is just a *Doom* clone, and we reckon you could probably quite happily live without it... (Sorry Will!)

Wing Commander IV

(85: Recommended) Origin/Electronic Arts – Space Combat Sim £TBC

The filmed sequences apparently cost over eight million dollars – and it shows, as they really are very impressive. Unfortunately though, despite a genuinely interesting plot, a strong storyline and the fact that *Wing Commander IV* is the most cinematic gaming experience you'll find, the gameplay's seriously lacking. You'll also need a mighty meaty PC to play it on.

Issue 36 – March 1996

Absolute Zero

(70) Domark – Space Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Don't even consider attempting *Absolute Zero* unless your PC's got a serious amount of spare hard disk space – our reviewer found that it needed 20MB just to have the menu running at optimum performance! It's all a bit of a shame really, as this really could have been an entertaining variation on the *Wing Commander/Elite* genre: it's got loads of ground-based missions, various different characters, some fairly complex mission objectives, SVGA spaceships, alien monsties, a big plot twist... but it's also got bland scenery and a disappointing frame rate. To sum up, it's *Wing Commander* on the rocks.

Civilization 2

(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

This is basically an enhanced version of the first game, however, this time round the combat's been tightened up and plenty of new units and advances have been added, as well as 'hit points' – even die-hard fans of the original *Civilization* will find that there certainly is still a lot to be learnt. Of course the biggest difference is that *Civilization 2* is completely 3D – although moving up a perspective can make things a little bit cluttered and sometimes a bit hard to follow at times, especially if you use the option to have multiple windows open at once. (NB: Windows 95 or 3.1 with WinG required.)

Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2

(60) Core Design – Helicopter Sim £TBC

The Sega CD helicopter blaster gets updated for the PC – although we're not really sure why they bothered. Although its got arcade-style controls it's even less realistic than most games of its type, and it's totally spoilt by a haphazard viewpoint – one minute the sky's empty, the next you've got something right in front of you. Even worse, targets that you lock onto can vanish from sight as you fire. This means you end up shooting from a stationary position, making you more vulnerable to attack and, basically, ruining the game.

Formula One Grand Prix 2

(95: Classic) MicroProse – Racing £44.99

Our reviewer called this an absolute masterpiece – even menu screens, sub menus, pre-race options and set-up screens can keep you happily occupied for ages. If you want the options and textures in their full glory you'll need a Pentium, but even in low-res it looks great. The attention to detail is amazing thanks to Geoff Crammond's perfectionism, and the physics of the game engine are outstanding – give up your social life now!

Police Quest: SWAT

(83: Recommended) Sierra – Adventure £49.99

Daryl Gates makes a welcome return with what has to be the best game in the *Police Quest* series. It's a different and enjoyable twist on the traditional adventure game – the only thing holding it back from a classic rating is a lack of compatibility with a light gun.

Rayman

(76) Ubisoft – Platform Game £TBC

From the Sony PlayStation come cutesy Disney-esque sprites, silky smooth parallax scrolling and colourful backgrounds with 68 levels; however, there aren't any that clever puzzles or particularly taxing levels, just nice graphics and a learning curve that veers from easy-peasy to annoying. Sorry *Rayman*, but despite the good presentation, you're ultimately a bit limited and pretty linear.

The Beast Within: Gabriel Knight 2

(88: Recommended) Sierra – Adventure £44.99

Admittedly *The Beast Within* isn't perhaps the most difficult game you'll ever play, but as an interactive movie it's brilliant. The acting is great, the FMV scenes contribute beautifully to the atmosphere and the plot gets increasingly complex and engrossing. Excellent!

Time Gate

(84: Recommended) Infogrames – Arcade Adventure £44.99

From the team that brought us *Alone In The Dark* comes something that looks like erm... *Alone In The Dark*, but set back in the days of the Knights Templar. However, there are some annoying inconsistencies, downright infuriating puzzles, items that are impossible to pick up, and it's easy to miss things, on top of that you'll find yourself saving furiously because you keep getting brutally killed when you least expect it. If you like *ATD*, you'll like this as it's almost exactly the same – which is why we haven't given it a higher score.

Warcraft 2: Tides Of Darkness

(82: Recommended) Zblac – Strategy £44.99

Despite a dodgy *At Warcraft 2* is very addictive and enjoyable – and it's even better still if you can take advantage of the multi-player option and play over a network. All in all, a definite 'must-buy' for anyone who liked the original.

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Allied General

(83: Recommended) SSI/Mindscape – Wargame £44.99

The follow-up to the highly successful *Panzer General*. Not much different, although the interface has been enhanced and thanks to Windows you can have any resolution you like. The ground scale is a bit haphazard and varies too much from scenario to scenario, but on the whole *Allied General* should find favour not only with wargamers but with casual wargamers as well. Simplistic yes, but there's far more to this game than most of its genre. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

Battleground Gettysburg

(87: Recommended) Empire Interactive – Strategy Wargame £39.99

The second in the *Battleground* series has an excellent feel for the Gettysburg battles, (1-3 July 1863). QuickTime movies really are a visual treat, the sound effects are excellent, and if you get stuck there's a comprehensive manual and a Quick Start guide. *Gettysburg* is well produced and highly playable – hex-head wargamers will love it. But, you'll need 130MB hard disk space for full installation, or 60MB otherwise. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

Big Red Racing

(87: Recommended) Domark – Racing £TBC

This is rather like a first-person perspective *Micro Machines*. It's brilliant fun, with 24 huge courses (including Mars, Venus, Moon and water) and there are loads of vehicles to choose from (snow ploughs, big foot monster trucks, Florida 'swampmaster' semi-amphibious propeller boat things...). You can even recreate *The Italian Job* bombing round Italy in a Mini!

Comix Zone

(68) Sega – Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Seriously tedious beat 'em up from Sega's newly-founded PC team. You play the part of a cartoonist trapped inside a comic book. Yawn.

Descent 2

(90: Classic) Interplay – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £TBC

Hardened *Descent* players will find adequate new perils to test them, but the game's well-paced enough for newbies. There are new weapons, monsties and great sound effects, plus 'Capture The Flag' team games where you can take sides and co-ordinate tactics to overcome your rivals. Overall it's a fun, involving and addictive game. If you loved the original, you'll be totally besotted with this one.

Ecco The Dolphin

(55) Sega – Arcade £29.99

The Mega Drive game from a few years ago. Unfortunately even the pretty animation can't save it from being totally boring. Next!

Extreme Games

(70) Psygnosis – Sport £29.99

The PlayStation 'trendy sports' game involving mountain bikes, skateboards, in-line skates and street luges, but the PSX version has excellent graphics and the animation is much, much better – it's too slow on a P133 and even with the detail switched down it plods along, thus destroying any enjoyment factor it might have had.

Ian Botham International Cricket

(78) Beam Software – Sport £34.99

Surprisingly good simulation of one of the world's dullest sports. It's not as playable as the SNES version and has embarrassingly cheap and tacky FMV footage – essentially though it's playable and a good laugh.

NBA Live 96

(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts/EA Sports – Sport £44.99

It's basketball's turn for EA's Virtual stadium treatment, which means four different angles for each camera. It's fast, with intuitive controls, reasonably well-animated player sprites as well as being playable in both one- and two-player modes. The in-game graphics are a bit muted and it can be hard to follow the ball when the game gets crowded but it's very playable all the same. There are three levels of difficulty and an option to play exhibition games or a full game season, plus arcade, simulation and custom modes.

Resurrection: Rise 2

(73) Acclaim/Mirage – Beat 'Em Up £44.99

Far better than the original, but a long way from being a classic. It borrows from other established beat 'em ups: it's got *Street Fighter*'s projectile weapons, *Mortal Kombat*'s death moves and the super-combo moves of Nintendo's *Killer Instinct*. It appears to have everything – moves, hordes of characters and secret warriors, bonus levels – but it doesn't have the same addictive gameplay. When you kick and punch the blows don't 'connect', and what's the point of a beat 'em up where you don't feel that you're inflicting any grief?

Tempest 2000

(85: Recommended) Atari – Arcade £29.99

Atari's 15-year old game is dragged kicking and screaming into the '90s, revamped with a kicking techno track. You have to defend your tunnel by shooting at the enemy craft trying to invade your space – but don't be deceived by the simplicity of it, it's not as easy as it sounds. Hours and hours of classic arcade fun.

Tomcat Alley

(34) Sega – Flight Sim £29.99

Repetitive gameplay, dodgy graphics. Ugh!

Top Gun

(92: Classic) MicroProse – Flight Sim £TBC

Excellent, apart from dodgy misleading views and a frame rate in hi-res which is only just acceptable on a P133. MicroProse have pulled off what everyone else has been trying to do, which is to add a cinematic storyline to a flight sim. These bits blend together without being overlong, so that no momentum is lost. Atmosphere, with a capital 'A'.

Warhammer

(73) Mindscape – Strategy Wargame £TBC

Addictive, challenging real-time strategy with an interesting setting and strong plot. Once you're hooked you'll come back for more, even though it really is much too hard, the control system is too fiddly and chance plays too much of a role. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

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ATF

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99

The US Navy *Fighters* engine gets seriously spruced up and then introduced to a large number of 'conceptual' aircraft. The plane's smooth flying is brilliant and the differences between the aircraft are more than noticeable. This is seriously good stuff for the propeller heads among you.

C&C: The Covert Operations

(84: Recommended) Virgin – Strategy £14.99

Argh! Spoooge. Spoooge...

If you've enjoyed fighting your way through *Command & Conquer* you can carry on – the mission disc is here! It's a must-have for any *C&C* fan, but be warned that it's bloody hard!

Metaltech Earthsiege 2

(90: Classic) Sierra – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Earthsiege is widely regarded as the best of all the big robot games – and the good news is that the sequel has better graphics, better sound effects and loads of new weapons. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

Kingdom O'Magic

(82: Recommended) SCI/Format – Adventure £44.99

More point-and-click fun, but this time with stereotypical gay hairdressers and women with huge boobs. It's quite funny at times.

Normality

(90: Classic) Gremlin Interactive – Adventure £TBC

Gremlin's ambitious and superb 3D point-and-click adventure proves that you can still muck around with genres and come up with something new. It's not quite as funny as the likes of *Sam and Max or Discworld*, but it's certainly well worth having a look at.

PGA European Tour

(94: Classic) EA Sports – Sport £44.99

For all of you budding Nick Faldos and Ian Woosnams out there, test your swing with the greatest golf game in existence. It gets de-Yanked and tweaked a bit and is another classic from EA Sports.

Speed Haste

(79) Electronic Arts – Racing £29.99

Imagine a cross between *Virtua Racing* and *Daytona USA* that only costs twenty quid and doesn't look quite as good.

Spycraft

(91: Classic) Activision – Adventure £49.99

Activision have surprised us all with this one. It's basically a 'spy simulator', and if you've ever fancied getting your grubby mitts on spy satellites, decoding routines, image analysers and infra-red goggles, now's your chance. This has loads of FMV, loads of puzzles and has some of the most original features we've seen for a long time. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

S.T.O.R.M.

(70) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £TBC

Nice graphics, traditional controls, but what happened to the gameplay? And er... hang on, this looks like *Scramble*, but with much prettier graphics.

Virtual Snooker

(60) Interplay – Sport £34.99

A year after *Virtual Pool*, we get the same game, except that this time around it's with snooker balls and loads and bloody loads of FMV of Steve 'intensely dull' Davis. A complete video of a 147 break, anyone? No?



It had to happen... people are finally accepting that Windows 95 is actually a "Good Thing", and on top of that it seems that the Duke Nukem vs Quake argument will rage and rage and rage.

F1GP2 WHINGE

Having read your enthusiastic review of F1GP2 in your March edition I decided to go out and buy it. To my disappointment I couldn't find it anywhere and was told by two retailers that the release date had been put back to the end of April. As it had been reviewed (as opposed to previewed) by *PC Zone* and other games mags with a release date of February, it's reasonable to assume that your review copy was complete and the release date firm to the best of your knowledge.

So why's the date changed all of a sudden? The retailers I visited told me that several other people had also asked for it, thinking it was available. Maybe I could understand if you had found

some glaring fault that MicroProse wanted to sort out beforehand, but this hardly seemed the case. I would value your comments and advice.

Paul Caris

101655,3450@compuserve.com

Unfortunately, F1GP2 is fast becoming legendary for being one of the most delayed games on the PC. MicroProse themselves have been concerned about the public perception of the game and have been keen to stress that it's worth the wait. When we originally reviewed it a few months ago we were under the impression that its release was imminent... by the time you read this though, F1GP2 should have arrived (the absolutely final, final, promise, cross-their-hearts and hope to be spanked vigorously etc, etc release date) on April 26.

WINDOWS 95 IS ACTUALLY OKAY SHOCKER!

I just have to say a few words to those people who have written in to you about Windows 95 being crap. What they actually mean is that they can't handle a computer - they'd be better off with a Nintendo (8-bit), or something similar.

Write to PC Zone

There are numerous ways to transmit your delightful scrawlings to *PC Zone*. You can either use the traditional method, often described as 'snail-mail' by the pretentious technocrats of this world...

WordProcessor

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...or you can be really hip, trendy and cyber and do a whacky e-mail thing

CompuServe: PC ZONE 100142, 2152

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I've been using Windows 95 since the release of the first beta (which was called Chicago). It worked amazingly well then, and still does.

I mean, come off it - who is so dumb as to install Windows 95 on a 4MB RAM system - even 8MB isn't enough to run it properly. In the beginning I was running Windows on a 486DX2/66 with 8MB

(Right) How long is the *Quake* vs *Duke Nukem* debate going to go on?! The *PCZone* consensus seems to be that the *QuakeHeads* are out in front (sorry *Nukemites*!).





RAM, before upgrading to 16MB RAM; I now work with a P90-based machine kitted out with 32MB RAM, and as you can probably imagine, Windows runs extremely smoothly – but then it ran smoothly with 16MB as well.

One of the major things I use my computer for is games. Admittedly, with some MS-DOS based titles Windows 95 had difficulty finding the sound card without loading the sound card drivers on start-up. I got round this easily by adding the drivers on the AUTOEXEC and CONFIG.SYS – maybe those moaners don't know how to edit those files?!

Later on an even better idea came to me – multi-choice boot files, with one option being the default Windows 95 boot, and the other an MS-DOS boot (shelled to COMMAND.COM). Or you can just press <F4> on start-up and boot with your old DOS files!

And one more thing: people wanting to go back to Windows 3.x after using Win95! Windows 3.x *sux!!!* It always has, it always will!!!! It's slow, eats up your system resources and crashes like 20000 times a day!!! (But then again maybe it doesn't with them, 'cos they're probably using notepad and playing *Solitaire* all day long...) That's it!

Oded Grober, oded@netvision.net.il

...AND AGAIN

When are you going to stop printing all those silly letters from people going on and on complaining about Windows 95? The majority of problems are related to speed – but then it seems that most of these whingers are trying to run it on a 486 with 8MB RAM! As I'm sure you are all very well aware, that just isn't good enough these days!

Would they also prefer to be running *F19 Stealth Fighter* rather than *EF2000*? Technology does not stand still, and the PCs that they bought two years ago will still perform the tasks adequately that they did then – but no more. Let most of us be happy that at last there is an

operating system environment which brings the PC into the '90s. It is a pleasure to use in terms of aesthetics, friendliness, plug and play hardware and memory configurations, given the correct level of hardware to run in. I buy a lot of games, and a lot of the more recent ones actually run better under Win95 than DOS if the properties are set up correctly. So please, let the moaning stop, and ask people to dip into their pockets if they want decent performance with today's software.

Iain MacKenzie

imackenzie@uk.b-r.com

I have to admit that I agree... sort of. I've been using Windows 95 on my machine here at work since just before it was officially released, and despite a few teething problems it's been very good. Early on I used it with a PC endowed with a mere 8Mb, but now that I've banged in an extra 8Mb it's working just fine. It's done some weird things from time to time: it spent a week totally convinced that I didn't have a CD-ROM drive, and on another occasion it decided that it really didn't want to use the sound card (maybe they'd fallen out? Who knows?), but on the whole I get the impression that this is more a fault with Plug and Play as opposed to Windows 95 itself.

DUKEM NUTTY BOY

I've only got the demo of *Duke Nukem 3D* but it's the dog's bollocks – forget *Doom* and put *Hexen* under the table (to sort out that wobbly leg). The game itself is brill, but it enters a league of its own with *Duke* matches. Laying pipebomb traps, hovering above your scummy opponent, crouching down in the loo, waiting for him (or her – better not be sexist) to come in for a pee (yep, you can even have a piss in the toilet)... It's taking over my life, I'm going insane, it's even better than sex (well, nearly). That's it – I'm off to get my BFG out, it's time to start blasting. I know you won't print this but I just had to write to get this off my chest.

Aaaaaah some mother***** has blown it away. That's it – this means war.

Paul Goodwin

100774,3533@compuserve.com

Get a grip for god's sake... go and play Quake and prove yourself to be a real man. Remember "Quake pour homme, Duke Nukem 3D pour femme". Or something.

FOR SALE...

Hi, I don't know if you could print this 'for sale' message... It's for a fabulous work/games machine which comes with all the associated paraphernalia:



Letter from Barry Biro

Each month we'll be bringing you a piece of correspondence from the mighty pen of one Barry Biro... a veritable tour de force in computing knowledge who has previously worked on such journalistic epics as *Oric/Dragon Gamer*, *The One For All Kinds of Games*, *My Sinclair* and *The Dragon*. As you'll soon find out, Bazza certainly knows his stuff and will be blessing us with his scribbles from now on.

BARRY'S BAR ROOM BRAWL

I've had a bee in my bonnet recently about the appalling standard of computer RPGs, and as former (North) Wales correspondent for *The Dragon* I reckon I'm in a position to diagnose this problem. Take the following example...

A few of the lads from my local RPG club 'The Riders of Rohan' came round the other evening and I can honestly say I had one of the most excellent AD&D all-nighters I've had in yonks! After polishing off a couple of gallons of home brew (still one of life's bargains at just 8p a pint – why do people pay pub prices for a pint of chemical crap?), we were all in the RPG spirit for a classic bar room brawl! *D&D* style!

Incidentally, I don't want you to think that I'm some kind of boring traditionalist so perhaps I'd better tell you that we steered clear of the hackneyed Tolkien mythos and plumped, rather controversially I feel, for a humorous Pratchettian melee.

Things got off to an exhilarating start with Thorax my 7th level triple-elf deciding to engage in a little petty larceny. Unbelievably, the bold so-and-so tried to pick the pocket of a hill giant (role-playing, remember!) but DM only gave him a 16 percent chance of success. I rolled... most excellent! 14 percent on two D20, I came away with a Staff of Amiable Countenance and 60gp to the good.

Malheureusement for the rest of the party Rincewind the 6th level Dwarven (Tolkien's spelling only please!) got a tad greedy and tried to emulate the plucky elf's success. A crucial moment... he rolled 00 on two D20 and before you could say 'EE Doc Smith's classic Grey Lensman Series' the MU he was attempting to steal from had cast Strong-Hold of the Ample-Endowed and he'd taken 47hp and looked decidedly the worse for wear.

Then, amazingly, my mate Swifty's 8th Level Anti-Paladin Strong-Heart, fell for the old 'grey ooze on the ceiling' trick. Meanwhile Gladrags the Magical had cast Thurmals Pantaloons of Irrepressible Splendour and walked off with a magic dagger (+2 as well!). Things turned ugly so I furballed everyone (which didn't go down too well, but then no one knew my alignment was chaotic-neutral) and legged it. DM gave me 600xp and I went up a level.

You see, how about that for head-on full frontal gameplay? You so-called 'computer RPGers' look like a pretty sad bunch now, don't you? Don't get me wrong, I used to love RPGs. I played those old text adventures so much that my pals at 'The Riders' called me 'Tex'.

Modern RPGs can't compete – they do all your thinking for you. State of the art graphics and user-friendly point-and-click interfaces are no substitute for the 'clack' of percentile dice and a seasoned DM. Even the trumpeted *Hexen* was a non-event and failed to deliver in every department except plot and gameplay. The Softies think that by adding amazing graphics and a storyline they will come up with a winner. Don't make me laugh... *Hexen*? 'Bollocks' more like!

For god's sake don't be taken in by all this crap – blow the dust off your Monster Manual, load up with D20s and join your fellow adventurers in the real world!

yours Barry Biro

- Pentium 133
- 16MB memory
- 1.6GB hard disk
- Fast EIDE controller
- Matrox Millennium video card with 4MB on-board RAM

(Right) We're such a caring lot here – we really didn't want to print a picture of Shane Richie, but seeing as you asked, David...

- Quad-speed CD-ROM drive (takes three CDs at a time)
- Ensoniq SoundScape sound card
- Lantech sound system with sub-bass woofer
- 17-inch monitor (Trinitron tube)
- Other hardware included, twin gamepads, joystick, mouse, keyboard, DOS 6.22, WFWG 3.11, Microsoft Office, including Word 6.0, Excel 5.0, Money, Power Point
- Plenty of the latest games on CD (boxed with receipts) such as EF2000, Command & Conquer, Crusader, Doom 2, UFO, Syndicate, Discworld, Day Of The Tentacle etc.

I still have all the original boxes and invoices. The bottom line is £3000 or the very nearest offer. Reason for sale: I need to upgrade my car and also my windsurfing equipment.

For more detailed info on the machine and software contact me on:

jason.graves@SMC.com

Er... Okay. Not a bad deal really. Got any more stashed anywhere? I've actually been meaning to ask if anybody out there would have a use for some kind of classifieds section in PC Zone? Are there any takers? If enough people write in we'll start something regularly.

OBLIGATORY WEIRDO CORNER

Ode to a small lump of green putty I happened to find under my armpit one midsummer's day. Yo Dudes! Great mag!



Like Wow! Pppplllleeeeeaaassssseeee bring back the obligatory weird foreign letter! They're, like, sooo stupid! Also, explain for us foreigners who the hell this Shane Richie bastard is so that we can despise him with equal intensity. Oh, and I hope you all noticed how Captain Sourpuss and the anaemic eleven (otherwise known as the English 1st eleven) got thoroughly trounced and demoralised by our boys in January!

Oh, and Cully is God (and all the other bods at PC Zone are demi-gods).

David Moore, Johannesburg, South Africa (formerly of Ipswich, Suffolk)

Oh god... a weirdo. Hello... Are you okay? How many fingers am I holding up? Can you see? Yes? Two? Well done. Phew... thank god you're so far away.

QUAKE... REALLY?

Thanks for an excellent mag!!! Right, now that's over with, I really do think you should include QTEST1.ZIP on your next cover CD. I'm surprised that it isn't on the latest one – or maybe here in Sweden we get the mag a bit later? In any case I assume you know what it is, but if you don't it's the Quake Deathmatch Test demo. Bloody excellent and fun.

You know where to find it (probably): ftp.cdrom.com, ftp.idsoftware.com, and plenty of other places has it...

It would be nice to receive an answer.
Jonas Ransjy, ulrika@mb.ks.se, Sweden

This could well be a nomination for this month's weirdy foreign letter – although it is a tad weak. However, as we printed a seven page feature about Quake, it could be said that maybe you aren't quite paying enough attention there at the back.

As for publishing the QTEST file on our CD... well, unfortunately iD Software have put a blanket ban on cover-mounting the demo – and rightly so. Despite the fact that it has given everyone a thrill over the past month, it doesn't really illustrate how good the final product will be. If someone simply loaded it from a cover disc they would almost certainly be disappointed because the QTEST file is a network test demo. The real crunch for Quake will happen when iD release the shareware version – then there will no doubt be a mad rush for the software and the game will be stuck on the front of virtually every computer magazine on earth. **Z**

(Below) Oh, all right then, QuakeHeads can get their own back on the Nukemites now by scaring the shit out of them with this monstie.



Culky Says...



DEAR ENGLAND, Alright? Culky here isn't it, from the centre of London.

While you lot is all been working hard this week, so is I! Culk's been doing a bit of reserge isn't it, down the library and that, like where I never normally go. I found out that us Culs not only got the family motto... "He Couldn't Of Done It As We Wasn't There"... we also got a family tree. And it ain't the sort of tree what grows nice juicy peaches on nither, although we got some of them too, in mi mum's garden and that, isn't it.

No... Colin means the kind of tree where you can get a butcher's at where you was got from, you know, born like. Yeah, and it came as no surprise to see that mi uncle was the 'Grand-Master-De-Pistons' - Popeye! And I got a copy of the family tree to show you, so you can see just how hard us Culs is.

**ROLL UP!
ROLL UP!
COME AND GET IT!
"COLIN CULK'S PISTON PETROL"
only £1.99 per can!**
Available from
CLEARVIEW AUTOS
of Feltham

filling up with my special spinach paste.

No one refuses a tin of spinach from Colin, not no one never!

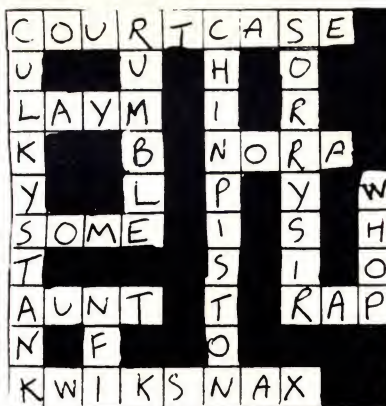


PC Zone readers can get a special trial tin by sending in two pictures of Culky from the magazine to the following address:

**Culky's 'Piston Petrol' Offer
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SO SEND OFF FOR YOUR FREE CAN TODAY!

Old Colin had you working overtime last month didn't it? Well, I said I'd print the solution to last month's Cryptic Crossword, and Culky never doesn't print nothink or anythink he reckoned on he was going to print... so here I are print it.



Yeah, and in case you're wondering what LAYM stands for, well it was: you'd be "Looking At Your Mouth" in the mirror after crossing Colin, and noticing how **swollen** and **red** it was!

Hope you enjoy the spinach! Cheers!... Culky! **Z**

Culky's Community Cures

It's time for... Colin's racy, hard, and fast advice column. Your problems are Culky's pleasure!

Dear Mr Culk,

I bought a bobble hat like yours from a local camping shop, but I spilt some ketchup on it. When I washed it, it shrank and now it's too small. I contemplated over what I should do, and decided to take it back and complain. The large guy behind the counter refused to give me my money back, and then threatened me. What should I do?

Joshua Emmett, Birmingham

Culky Says... Dear Joshua,

You'll find the hat now fits your fist perfectly, so you won't be leaving any dabs when you go back down there and give this geez some Midland rumble. What is contemptation? Is it curry or somethink?

Culky then says...

Don't let me catch you in a camping shop nither... camping is for girlies. Culky don't speak to what are girlies.

Dear Mr Culk,

I'm scared, really scared. I'm going to court next month for crashing into a police car after trying to escape from a solo ram-raiding job at my local Dixons.

The police allegations are without independent corroboration, but my solicitor thinks I'll be better off pleading guilty. What do you Culs reckon?

Mathew Innes, Redhill, Surrey

Culky Says... Dear Mathew,

YOU AIN'T GUILTY OFF NOTHINK!

Don't worry none. When you go to court, say it was the law that what ram-raided the hi-fi shop, after the seargent had nicked your car. Say that you 'borrowed' the squad car, what they left outside Dixons, in order to give chase and make a citizen's arrest on the law. That's how the crash happened.

Culky then says...

If the judge don't bang the law up, then get ya chin-pistons out and stick a few up his pie factory. Then leg it.

Dear Mr Culk,

What do you say to the police when you get pulled up in your rusty VW tank?

Stephen Tulley, Leeds

Culky says... Dear Steve,

I say, "Officer? Do them spray what I order come in?"



ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO PEOPLE were saying "Wow, Teletext!" in much the same way that they're now saying "Wow, the Internet!". And it's all bollocks really, isn't it? You know it and I know it. I mean, Teletext is simply a souped-up version of the test card, and the bloody Internet is simply a souped-up version of the telephone. Big deal. Forgive me while I soil my underpants in utter astonishment. But you don't want to hear about that, let's go back to Teletext, which is now so old-fashioned that it should be pretty sussed. Except it's not!

I know a deaf girl called Nikki whose main use for Teletext (obviously) is its subtitling facility. I'll mention here that Nikki can lip-read brilliantly – so much so, she can even distinguish between certain accents. It's uncanny, really. And she's opened the world to me as to what tv 'extras' talk about, too... she once saw one extra in *EastEnders* telling another about how he'd got a small talking part in an episode of *Cracker*. Excellent.

However, moving on from the conversations of extras, Nikki often encounters tv enjoyment problems when the 'main actor' in a programme has his or her back turned towards the camera for any length of time. And it's here you'll doubtless say: "Yeah, but that's where the subtitles come in, surely?" Wrong! According to Nikki, the subtitles aren't always very accurate; if a character has been given a particularly long line, the

He's afraid of... Teletext

subtitled will have done a 'precis' in order to fit the sentence on to the screen – and apparently some subtitlers are a bit crap, with the result that Nikki always feels she's drawing the short straw, script-wise.

I have a solution to this, though – forget Teletext Page 888, let's have an alternative, called Teletext Page 889!

Characters facing the camera while using Page 889 are subtitled as per normal, seeing as how lip-readers (such as Nikki) would spot any discrepancies anyway. However, if a character is facing away from the camera, the Page 889 subtitler would be given carte blanche to write exactly what he or she wanted. Their only directive would be as follows: "Make it meatier than what's really being said, but don't make it too incongruous."

This would mean that deaf viewers would no longer have to feel short-changed on 888. Switch over to 889 and they'd get their very own 'variations' of soaps, dramas, movies and especially documentaries, which are mostly voice-overs anyway. A couple of examples...

EASTENDERS, TELETXT PAGE 888

Pauline: (Towards camera) How can you accuse Willy of setting up Arthur? He's Arthur's best friend!

Mark: (Away from camera) Yes, but look at the facts, mum! He's suddenly got all this money, and he was the only other person to have direct access to the bank account! Surely you've at least thought about it?

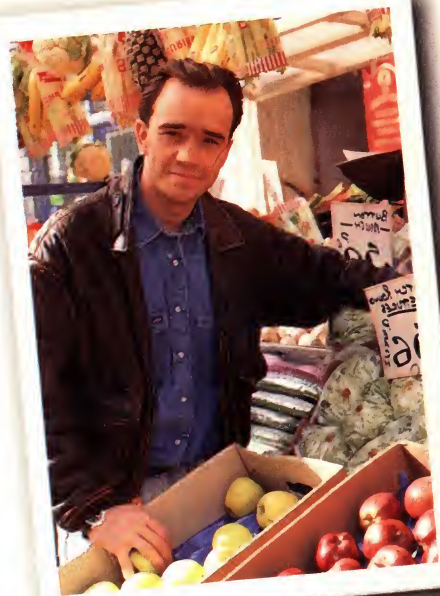
Pauline: Of course I've thought about it, but I refuse to believe it.

EASTENDERS, TELETXT PAGE 889

Pauline: (Towards camera) How can you accuse Willy of setting up Arthur? He's Arthur's best friend!

Mark: (Away from camera) I'm sorry mum, I'm just worried about my health. I've been HIV-positive for about ten years now – and the scriptwriters can't stop me from getting full-blown AIDS for much longer, surely? It must have occurred to you?

Pauline: Of course I've thought about it, but I refuse to believe it.



THE LIFE OF PLANTS, TELETXT PAGE 888

David Attenborough subtitles to various stunningly filmed images: You may think that this is a common oak tree... but wait! Let's look again, as we speed up time. Yes, those harmless looking branches are in fact savage strangling fingers, with murder in mind. The oak is, indeed, a 100-foot warrior – and its adversary, this nearby elm, can hope only for a miracle as its very lifeblood is sucked dry. The humble bramble, meanwhile, passes unnoticed by the two behemoths through the extended battle as if a blur, its destination unknown, destroying all that dares to stand in its path. These are the killing grounds!

THE LIFE OF PLANTS, TELETXT PAGE 889

Teletext Page 889 subtitles to various stunningly filmed images: This is a speeded-up film of an oak tree and, as you can see, it looks as if it's going to steal the sunlight from the nearby elm – but don't forget that it's only moving at just 1mm a week. Stroll into the scenario with an axe (or better still a chainsaw) and you could sort the bully out once and for all. You could even get them both! And as for the bramble that appears to be sprinting between them, you could take it out with a strimmer! **Z**

Let's talk Irish!!!

In the first of an ongoing 'cut out and keep' series, Mr Cursor teaches you how to speak with an Irish accent (unless you're Irish of course, in which case you'll probably be quite good at it already). Simply repeat the following words several times, and then, if you can't work out what you're actually saying, check the upside-down translation below!

- Word 1: LIGATURE
- Word 2: YEFF
- Word 3: GUTTER
- Word 4: FIERCE
- Word 5: LAKE
- Word 6: APPEARER
- Word 7: TETS



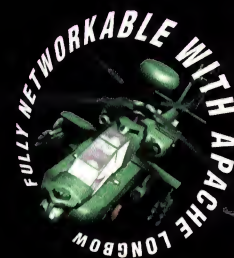
ENGLISH MEANING: "Look at you, you've got a face like a pair of tits." (© Father Ted, Channel Four)



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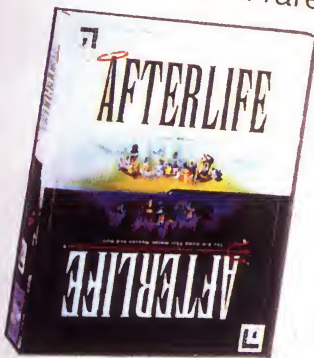
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